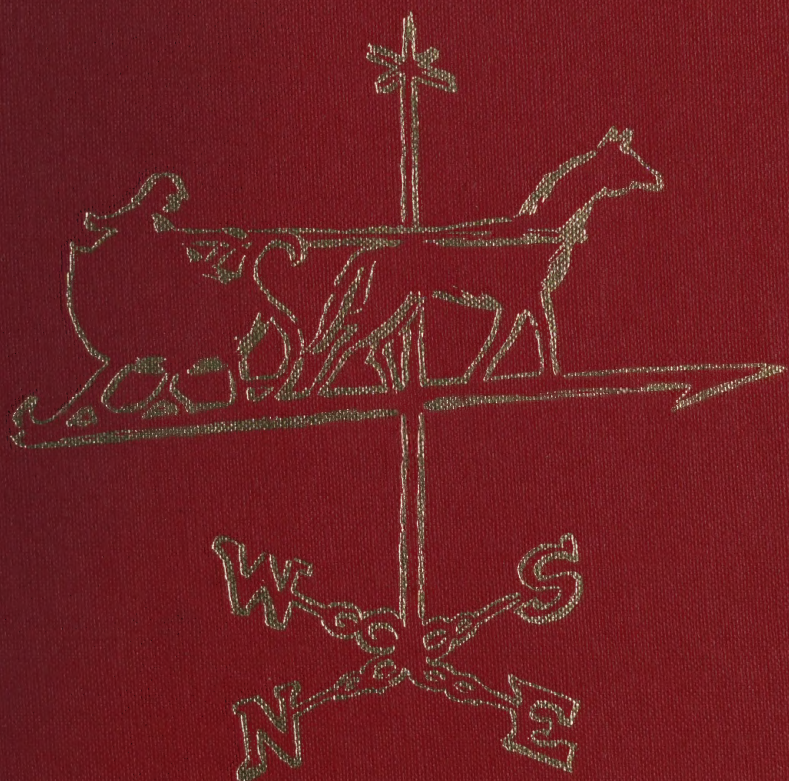


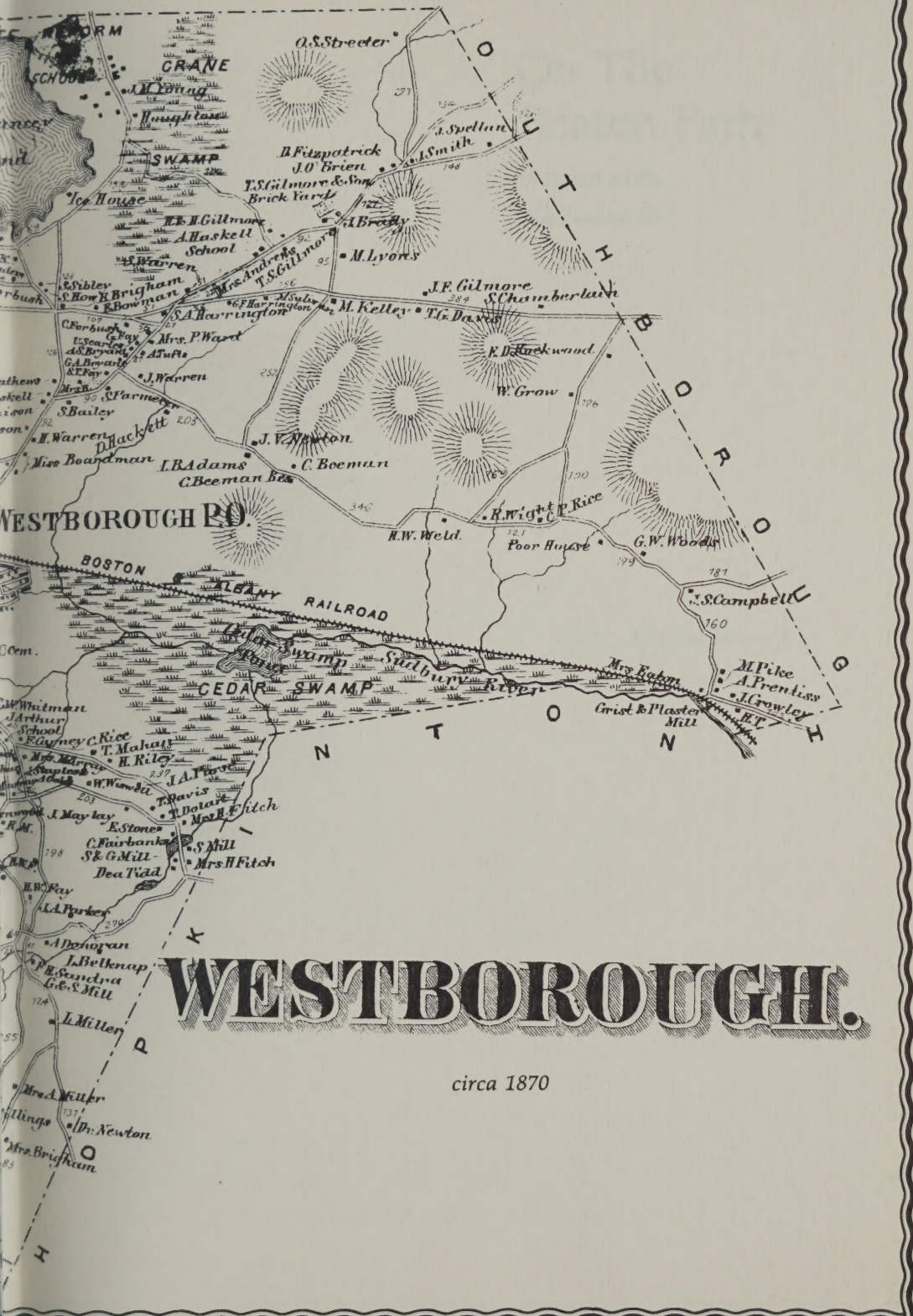
On The Beaten Path:

*Westborough,
Massachusetts*



By Kristina Nilson Allen





circa 1870

On The
Beaten Path:

Westborough,
Massachusetts

Kristina N. Allen

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Kristina Nilson Allen

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INTRODUCTION

Westborough—the name evokes a multi-faceted impression. It brings to mind a combination of high tech office parks, strawberry fields, the race track, State Hospital, Lyman School, the Rotary, and Lake Chauncy. Since this land was first settled more than 300 years ago, the town of Westborough has grown steadily to achieve a successful blend of industry, residences, and farms. It has seen times of booming industrial activity, punctuated with quieter periods when rural life on dairies and orchards held sway.

That a variety of individuals—from farmers to entrepreneurs—found their way here to establish homes and businesses is no coincidence. Westborough has always been on the beaten path.

The first arrivals came by dugout canoe, 8,000 years ago, paddling up to the headwaters of the Assabet and Sudbury Rivers to seek the quartzite found in Westborough hills. Later their descendants the Woodland Indians crisscrossed the territory, following the Old Connecticut Path from Massachusetts Bay into the heart of New England. They passed through Westborough en route to Canada (Milk Street) and to the south along the Narragansett Trail (South Street).

Europeans followed on these well-worn paths; John Oldham, the first white man to see the interior of New England, passed through Westborough in 1633. Thirty years later permanent settlers arrived to settle around Lake Chauncy. They and other colonists traveled east to Boston and west to the Brookfields along a spur of an Indian trail, which in 1810 was improved and straightened into the Boston-Worcester Turnpike (Route 9).

This first turnpike in America brought with it the bustle of stagecoaches; soon taverns and shops sprouted up along the pike in Westborough to accommodate the new arrivals. Some of the travelers—merchants, millers, carpenters, and lawyers—approved of the industrious village and decided to stay.

When the steam locomotive roared into the heart of Westborough in 1834, it ushered in a new era for the town's industrial development. Large factories for sleighs, shoes, straw hats, and even bicycles were built in the town center. The rails carried raw materials into town and finished goods—metal beds, ladies' nightgowns, trunks, textiles, curtains, and milk—out to the nation's marketplaces.

In the 20th century the trains remained a significant factor in serving the new Bay State Abrasives as well as older factories, carnation growers, and dairymen. Until 1960 businessmen and students were whisked to

Boston and Worcester on the commuter trains connecting Westborough to the major cities.

Trolleys also transected the town in the early days, connecting Westborough with Worcester, Marlborough, Southborough, Northborough, and Hopkinton. The high speed air trolley along Route 9 carried freight as well as passengers to Westborough's doorstep. These trolleys were replaced by 1930 when the automobile began to dominate America's transportation.

To accommodate the onslaught of cars and trucks, Route 9 was paved and improved in 1930. Clusters of motels blossomed along the highway in Westborough to serve weary travelers. Even the airways led into Westborough when a small airport on Otis Street was built in 1932.

With the construction of the Massachusetts Turnpike through town in 1956, Route 495 in 1965, and their interchanges in the late 1960s, Westborough found itself at the junction of major interstate highways. Over the next twenty years development slowly rippled out from the Boston area until in the 1980s Westborough was being heralded as the future "crossroads of New England."

Be it by dugout canoe, stagecoach, locomotive, trolley, or automobile, transportation has been the key to Westborough's development. It is now, as it always has been, located on the path to progress.

This is the story of the people who followed that path and stayed to build "The Hundredth Town."



THE DAWNING OF WESTBOROUGH

The graceful rolling hills of Westborough were sculpted by a glacier 600 to 800 million years ago in the late Precambrian age. The rocks, known as Westborough quartzite, were gradually veneered with glacial till, gravel, and soil until they could support towering oak forests. The highest point on these marginal uplands of Westborough is Fay Mountain at 707 feet above sea level, and the lowest point is at 300 feet.

Cedar Swamp at the southeast end of town was undoubtedly a glacial lake at the end of the last advancing glacier, 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. Little by little this lake was filled in with vegetation, silt, and peat to depths up to 100 feet. Presently the Metropolitan District Commission owns about one-third of the swamp, Bay State Abrasives about one-half, and private owners the balance. The 1500-acre Cedar Swamp is recognized statewide as an area of critical environmental concern for its important and fragile ecology.

Westborough is unique in that the headwaters of two major eastern rivers, the Assabet and the Sudbury, rise within its borders. The northern half of Westborough drains into the Assabet River. Emergent marsh, thick with cattails and loosestrife, characterizes this area, and two lakes, Hoccomocco and Chauncy, are found here.

The southern portion of Westborough drains into the Sudbury, which rises in Cedar Swamp. The swamp abounds with water birds and wildlife. In an effort to protect the quality and beauty of the headwaters of the



Glacial Hills along Mt. Pleasant Street.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

Sudbury, in 1983 the Sudbury Valley Trustees established a 62-acre sanctuary at the edge of Cedar Swamp. The land was bequeathed to them by Lawrence Walkup and provides an area of natural beauty for residents to enjoy.

Westborough Prehistory: 6000 B.C.- 1500 A.D.

Before recorded time, as early as 6000 B.C., Westborough was a center of activity for prehistoric man, as evidenced by artifacts found around Cedar Swamp, Lake Hoccomocco, and Lake Chauncy. It was the rivers that first brought humans to this marginal upland on the edge of the Worcester plateau. People traveled the waterways to the headwaters of the Assabet, a tributary of the Concord and Merrimack Rivers that rises near Lake Hoccomocco. The Sudbury River brought them to its headwaters in Cedar Swamp and near Lake Chauncy. The nearby Blackstone River, which empties southward into Narragansett Bay, and its tributary the Mill River lie within easy portage of Westborough.

Thousands of years before the arrival of European settlers, native Americans came to the Westborough area from the Atlantic coast by canoe and portage as well as by foot over the well-worn paths. At first it seems that just a few hunters passed through the region, for only a small number of local artifacts date back to the Early Archaic period of 7000 B.C. However, artifacts excavated in Westborough by archaeologist Dr. Curtiss Hoffman and his team since 1974 indicate that people began spending more time here in the Middle Archaic period (6000-4000 B.C.).

Dr. Hoffman, who has been conducting an archaeological survey of



Archaeologists unearth prehistoric artifacts.

Courtesy of Dr. Curtiss Hoffman.

Westborough, believes there were small bands of hunters at this time foraging briefly around Cedar Swamp. "We have found projectile points used on spears, javelins, and darts from this period," he reports. "Hunters invented the spear throwing stick or 'atl-atl' around this time, and it was used right up to when the bow and arrow were introduced around 700 years ago."

The hunters in Westborough used a two-foot-long throwing stick that was shaped like a gigantic crochet hook. "The hunter would put the butt end of the spear flush against the hook and hold onto both of them. Then he'd fling it overhand or underhand, holding onto the spear thrower and letting the spear go," explains Dr. Hoffman. "Since the person is no longer casting from his hand but from a point about two feet beyond, this method gives great trajectory and force—it's a superbly effective weapon in the 75-foot to 200-foot range."

The Late Archaic period (4000-2500 B.C.) was a time of particular activity in Westborough. Hoffman says, "During this time a group of maybe a dozen hunters were coming into Westborough for a short time especially for the stone tool resources here." Westborough quartzite and vein quartz were to be found mainly on Newton's Hill (off Route 9 near Route 495) and near Charlestown Meadows close to Hocomocco.

"The men would find an outcrop of quartzite, and using a large rock, they'd break off large chunks, which they took back to their campsite," Hoffman adds. "There they'd work the material down using

hammerstones — round granite cobbles they'd pick up in the river. By striking the quartzite near the edge they would produce a flake of the desired size and shape. Then either the flakes or the core, or both, were worked into tools. They made scrapers for hides, knives, and drills or perforators. It would take only twenty minutes for a skilled worker to produce a projectile point," says Hoffman.

The men in a small task group would come to Westborough around October to make tools, hunt for deer, then return home with the finished tools, probably downstream along the Merrimack, Blackstone, or Charles River. Westborough is one of the few towns in Worcester County where dated evidence from this period is found.

Around 2500 B.C. local artifacts indicate that a change occurred in lifestyle. People began moving upstream perhaps for an entire season, as the sea claimed more land and population increases forced them into new settlements. "Whole family groups of about fifty would come to Westborough and live off the land for a season," Hoffman notes. "We have found evidence of a smoking rack over a large red earth pit where they did bulk food processing. These people preferred smaller, more plentiful game like beaver, muskrat, squirrel, fish, birds, and even turtles. They'd smoke the food over the pit to preserve it."

In this period the hunter-gatherers had become proficient in working local quartz into small tools. Many of these tools were used in scaling and filleting fish, so it is probable that these transitory groups fished by spear or net. The nets may have been placed along the shoreline of the Assabet where the river curves; plummets or weights for nets and line have been found at the Charlestown Meadow site.

Although nothing remains of the dwellings of these family groups, people of that period — 4300 years ago — lived in round huts or wigwams. They cut down saplings, drove the sharpened ends into the ground in a circle, then bent and lashed the saplings together at the top for the framework. The frame was then covered by bark, reeds, or vegetable fiber.

These people arrived in Westborough most likely by dugout canoe. "In the Late Archaic period, they spent more time making permanent things," Hoffman observes. "To make a dugout canoe they would cut down a large tree trunk with stone axes, remove the bark and start a fire on the top at one end. Then they'd put out the fire, scoop out the char with a gouge, and start a fire in the channel. This would continue until the trunk was hollowed out."

People in the Early Woodland period (700 B.C.-500 A.D.) came to Westborough seasonally to hunt, fish, and make tools. By this time they were making clay vessels fired in earth ovens. There is also evidence of

horticulture and extensive trade during the Middle Woodland period (500-1200 A.D.) at the Westborough sites.

By 1200-1600 A.D., the Late Woodland period, most of the people were involved in agriculture; they lived in large seasonal camps along the coast and major rivers. They settled where they found soft river bottom and coastal soil that was easy to cultivate by their hand methods.

Only a few scattered tribes lived in the Westborough area, and then only seasonally. According to Dr. Hoffman, there were no permanently settled Indians in Massachusetts. The people whom the colonists "discovered" here in the 1600s had been in the region more than 7000 years. They were given the name "Nipmucs" or "those who live around the lakes."

Indian Trails

Westborough has been a crossroads not only in present times but also hundreds of years ago when Indian trails leading to all points of the compass transected the town. The trail running along Milk Street divided in Northborough; one branch led west through Rutland, Greenfield, and on to Mohawk Country. It was this trail that the Mohawks used in their raiding parties against the Nipmucs and the Nashuas. The other branch of the trail led to Canada by way of Lancaster and Burlington, Vermont, passing Lake Champlain into Montreal. It was doubtless this route that the Cagnawaga Indians followed in returning to their Canadian village with the four kidnapped Rice boys in 1704.

South Street was the Narragansett Trail, which wound south through Mendon to eventually reach Providence. Indians, and in the 1650s the missionary John Eliot, traveled through Westborough between the settlements of the Wamesits on the Assabet River in Marlborough and the Nipmucs on the Blackstone River in Grafton. This path crossed the present State Hospital grounds on Lyman Street, circled south of Lake Chauncy, crossed Chauncy Meadows near Park and Milk Streets, then went over Maynard Hill to meet the Indian trail later called the Old Connecticut Path.

It is this Old Connecticut Path that plays a prominent part in settling Westborough and lands to the west. The Indians followed this trail from Massachusetts Bay into the heart of Connecticut. It branched from the Nashua Trail at Waltham and led through the present Framingham, Ashland, Hopkinton, Westborough, Grafton, and on to Hartford. The Old Connecticut Path entered Westborough at Belknap Street, crossed over to Warren Street, went down Mount Pleasant, up Eli Whitney Street, and out to a spring on West Main Street before continuing into Grafton. Fay Mountain, the highest point in eastern Massachusetts, served as an important early landmark to travelers on this trail.

It is over the Old Connecticut Path that John Oldham, the first European to explore the interior of New England, traveled. In the summer of 1633 he and three others penetrated 160 miles into the interior, finding lodging in Indian wigwams along the way. Oldham returned with hemp and black lead as well as glowing reports of the fertile Connecticut Valley. Three years later in June 1636 Reverend Thomas Hooker led 100 of his congregation from Newton along the Old Connecticut Path to settle in the area known today as Hartford, Connecticut.

Other bands of explorers and settlers followed until the trail was a well-traveled highway. It was along the Old Connecticut Path that Revolutionary troops marched through Westborough from Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware to join the American forces in Cambridge in 1775.

The first settlers in the area built their homes along these established routes. Parts of the Old Connecticut Path were settled by David Warren (Warren Street), Perez Rice (Mount Pleasant and Ruggles), Eli Whitney (Eli Whitney Street), and the Fay family—John, James, Samuel, and Jonathan (West Main Street).



Perez Rice/Col. Joseph Harrington house, 116 Ruggles St., c. 1806,
ell c. 1730.

Photo by Paula Skog.

Indian Folklore

With rivers and footpaths attracting Indians within its bounds from

the earliest days, Westborough has many tales relating to these first Americans.

Legend of Hoccomocco

According to Indian legend the Evil Spirit, or Hobomoc, lurks beneath the dark, forbidding surface of Lake Hoccomocco. This dangerous spirit dwells in many a dark and lonely spot, and tales about these places—passed from generation to generation—are filled with unrequited love, revenge, and murder.

The Westborough legend of Hoccomocco tells the love story of the beautiful Indian maiden Iano and the young chieftain Sassacus. Iano had won the hearts of many of the young Indians and had seemed to favor the brave Wequoash before Sassacus wooed her. His love spurned, the proud Wequoash vowed vengeance on his rival and the fickle maid.

To preserve his dignity and prove his prowess, Wequoash stalked off into the hills in search of a panther on the eve of Iano and Sassacus' wedding. He cornered and killed the beast on nearby Boston Hill, where it is said there were as many rattlesnakes as there were people in Boston. As he returned to the tribe with his kill along the shores of Hoccomocco, Wequoash caught a glimpse of Iano.

That evening Iano had playfully decided to hide from her friends before her wedding. In her canoe she glided silently over the lake, every so often inclining her head close to the water to listen for pursuers. Thus Wequoash saw her, outlined in the moonlight. Silently he laid aside the panther and swam underwater to the canoe. As Iano leaned dreamily over the side, Wequoash grabbed her by the tresses and pulled her under to a watery grave. A large rock served to sink the canoe and Iano's lifeless body to the bottom of Lake Hoccomocco.

Sassacus and his men were searching for Iano by moonlight when the chief saw his bride and her canoe disappear mysteriously into the murky waters. He was convinced that the evil spirit Hobomoc had claimed his love, and the young chief sank into a deep despair.

When Wequoash returned a few days later with the panther, he accepted the praise, then administered to Sassacus. In his role of second-in-command, the jealous Wequoash gradually poisoned the chief and upon his death, assumed his duties.

One year later while Wequoash was sitting by Lake Hoccomocco's shores, a blue flame appeared over the spot where the murdered Iano slept. A mysterious canoe skimmed across the lake and Wequoash felt compelled to board it. It propelled the Indian to the flame that was suddenly transformed into Iano's image. The next year the experience was repeated,

but this time the spirit whispered, "Only once more."

Wequoash fell into a deep melancholy as another year passed. He gathered his tribe about him on the shores of the lake and confessed to the murders of Iano and Sassacus. When the ghostly canoe brought Wequoash to the middle of the lake this time, the flame took the shape of the angry Sassacus. Wequoash, in despair, wrapped his cloak about him and disappeared forever amidst a clap of thunder.

From that time on, the Indians believed that Hobomoc lived in the depths of the lake. To appease the angry spirit whenever they crossed Lake Hoccomocco, the Indians would drop a rock at the spot where Iano was murdered. Years later, when fishermen paddled by, their oars would strike against the mound of stones, a haunting memorial left by the Indians.

Jack Straw

The Indian Jack Straw has long been associated with Westborough, yet his true history remains clouded. Folklore has it that a local Indian, Waunuckow, was charged with a misdemeanor and dubbed by the magistrate "Jack Straw" after the hated rebel who led the Peasants' Revolt in England in 1381. The Indian was impressed into service aboard an English vessel and taken to Virginia where he served Sir Walter Raleigh as a guide and interpreter.

Raleigh took him as a curiosity to be exhibited before Queen Elizabeth's court, but the Indian was unhappy in England and was allowed to return



Jack Straw pasture, Ruggles St.

Courtesy of Mary Forbes Foster

to the New World. As the first Indian to be baptized in the English colonies, Jack Straw received a land grant of 300 acres in Westborough. His lands, reportedly the first granted to a Christian Indian, stretched from Ruggles Street to beyond the town reservoir.

Jack Straw lived many years in his wigwam on the crest of the Ruggles Street hill where both colonists and Indians continued to seek his services as interpreter and guide. He is mentioned in Governor Winthrop's journal and is reported to have accompanied the Sannops from Hartford to Boston to act as their advocate before the Massachusetts General Court. His name appears again in the records of the 1670s when in drawing up the Beers grant the General Court refers to the south line of Marlborough as "Jack Straw's Old Line." A stone marker erected near the corner of Old Coach and Bowman Streets reads in part, "Conversant in English, he served the colonists and government as interpreter with the Indians. His name has endured in Jack Straw Brook, Jack Straw Pasture, and Jack Straw Hill, all to the northwest of this place . . ."

Daniel and Martha Shattuck

After their marriage in 1719 Daniel and Martha Shattuck settled in Westborough to raise their family in a peaceful manner that belied their daring courtship. Daniel Shattuck was courting sixteen-year-old Martha Sargent on Sagatabscot Hill in Worcester when one Sunday in 1702 he was greeted by a grisly sight. Upon reaching the Sargent home he discovered that Martha's father Digory had been massacred, and the mother and five children taken captive by Indians. Following the trail, Daniel found the body of Mrs. Sargent and discovered that the others had been taken to Canada.

With Captain Thomas Howe and twelve men of Marlborough, Shattuck followed in pursuit beyond the Vermont border. Here the party turned back, but Daniel took what ammunition and food could be spared to continue the search. He wandered for seven years, seeking his betrothed everywhere. When he finally located Martha in the wilds, Daniel was seized and bound by her captives. They were determined to keep Martha and to put the intruder Shattuck to death.

In the dead of night Martha summoned the courage to escape her captors and to crawl beneath the tepee where Shattuck lay bound. She cut the thongs silently, then the couple grabbed guns and ammunition and wrecked all the canoes but the one in which they escaped. They paddled many miles until they could strike overland for home. Upon their return they were married and eventually settled into the life of solid Westborough citizens.

The Capture of the Rice Boys

The English colonists were actively involved in the struggle between England and France for land in North America during the French and Indian Wars. The French in Canada had established missions among the Indians to convert them to the Catholic faith and enlisted the Indians' aid in attacks on the colonists. The Indians of the Iroquois nation were eager to comply and particularly to add children to their tribes plagued by disease and a low birth rate. It was during Queen Anne's War (1702-1713) that Westborough suffered a tragedy at the hands of Indians from the mission village of Cagnawaga near Montreal.



Thomas Rice, second home, 115 W. Main St., c. 1713.

Photo by Paula Skog.

The time was August 8, 1704 and the setting the fields of Thomas Rice at the base of Grindstone Hill (Roundtop), now the High School property on West Main Street. Years later in 1769, Reverend Ebenezer Parkman described the scene in vivid detail:

"At the Southwest part of Marlboro, then called Chauncy, now Westboro, as several persons were busy spreading Flax, on a plain about 80 Rods from the House of Mr. Thomas Rice (who was several years formerly of the hon. House of Representatives for Marlboro) and a number of Boys were with them of which two were sons of ye said Mr. Thomas Rice, and three more, sons of Mr. Edmund Rice, Ten (some say seven) Indians suddenly rushed down a woody Hill close by, and knocking ye least of ye Boys (Nahor, about five years old) in ye Head, they seized

Two of Mr. Thomas Rice's Sons (Asher and Adonijah), the oldest of about 10, the other about 8 years; and two other of Mr. Edmund Rice's, of about 9 & 7; their names Silas & Timothy; and carried them away to Canada. Those persons who were spreading Flax escaping to ye House safely . . ."

Nahor, who had been killed because he was too young to make the journey, was buried in the southern corner of the present Memorial Cemetery, thereafter called Grave Plain. Thomas Rice sold his home for ransom money and after four years was able to redeem his oldest son, Asher. He built Asher a home in about 1720, which is now Dennybrook Farm on South Street. Asher never completely recovered from the shock of his capture and remained inordinately fearful of Indians all his life.



**Asher Rice/Minuteman Capt. Seth Morse house, 140 South St.,
c. 1725.**

Photo by Paula Skog.

The other Rice boys remained in Canada, adopting many of the Indian ways. Adonijah later married a French woman and established a farm near Montreal. Silas and Timothy were both assimilated into the Iroquois way of life, married Indian women, and lived at Cagnawaga.

Timothy, according to Parkman, "had much recommended himself to the Indians, by his own Superior Talents, his Penetration, Courage, Strength & warlike spirit." He was adopted by the chief as a son and became known as Oughtzorongoughton. In time Timothy Rice became an influential leader or sachem of the Six Nations of the Iroquois. He returned to visit Westborough in 1740 and although he recognized his

former home, he had lost the knowledge of his native tongue.

The name and influence of Timothy Rice continued among the Indians of Cagnawaga. During the Revolution the Canadian Indians were urged to join the fight by both British and Americans. It is reported that the Cagnawagas responded in a letter to Samuel Adams on March 29, 1775, saying, "... if they are obliged, for their own safety, to take up arms on either side, that they shall take part on the side of their brethren, the English in New England, all the chiefs of the Cagnawaga tribe being of English extraction, captivated in their infancy." During Westborough's 250th anniversary, a descendant of the captured Rice boys, an Indian woman from Canada, was an honored guest in town.



THE BIRTH OF THE HUNDREDTH TOWN

1660 - 1800

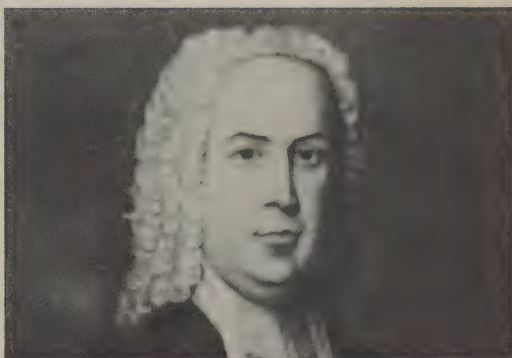
Land Grants

The fertile meadows and abundant water attracted not only Indians but early colonial settlers to the shores of Naggawoomcom (Lake Chauncy). It was this great pond and 500 surrounding acres that in 1659 had been granted as payment to Reverend Charles Chauncy (1592-1671) by a Massachusetts General Court short on currency but long on land. Reverend Chauncy had served as minister to the Pilgrims at Plymouth from 1638 to about 1641, then preached in Scituate for thirteen years until he was appointed the second president of Harvard College in 1654. Reverend Chauncy never had the opportunity to settle his land grant, for in 1660 the newly incorporated town of Marlborough asked that this choice parcel be annexed to its grant. The minister was given another tract of land, but the lake and settlement known as Chauncy Village in this southwest portion of Marlborough continued to carry his name.

In the early days of Massachusetts Bay Colony, land was granted either to individuals as a reward for service to the colony or to groups of settlers known as Proprietors. The present town of Westborough, encompassing 21.51 square miles — 13,474 acres of land and 292 acres of water — was made up of both types of grants.

Rev. Charles Chauncy.

*Courtesy of
Westborough Historical Society.*



The Beers Grant

Captain Richard Beers served the colony bravely in King Philip's War, and in 1677 his heirs were granted 300 acres including the former lands of the Indian Jack Straw near Ruggles Street and the present reservoir. In 1698 this land passed into the possession of Thomas Rice of Marlborough.

The Eaton Grant

In 1680 as payment of a debt to Governor Theophilus Eaton, founder of New Haven, the General Court granted the Eaton heirs a 500-acre tract that included most of the northern half of present Westborough. About



Samuel Fay house, 181 W. Main St., c. 1707.

Photo by Paula Skog.

two years later this land was divided into thirds and sold. One portion was purchased by the surveyor and miller John Brigham, another portion by his brother Thomas, and the final portion by Brigham nephews John and Samuel Fay. The Fays built several fine houses on their land along West Main Street. Thomas Brigham's property passed on to Jonathan Forbes, and John Brigham's land was eventually settled by Oliver Ward and Joseph Grout.

The Bosworth Grant

Edward Bosworth received a grant of 200 acres in 1686, laid out between the west line of Marlborough and the Farms (Shrewsbury). This land was eventually sold to Gershom Rice, one of the founders of the permanent settlement of Worcester. In 1701 Deacon Caleb Rice of Marlborough bought the parcel that included much of present Northborough and the northwest portion of Westborough.

Additional Land Expansion

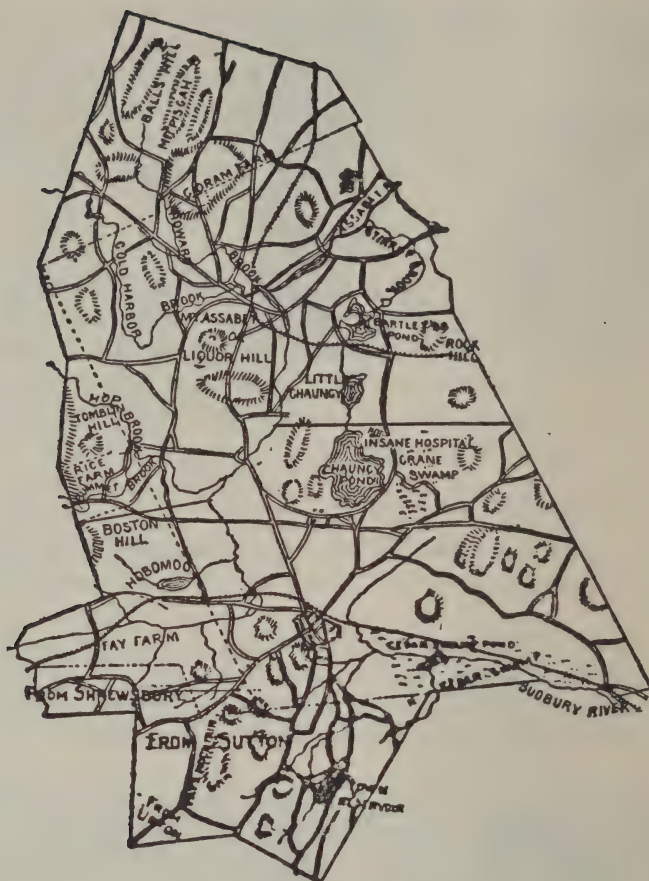
Although most of Westborough's land had been established by 1717, the town continued to grow during the 1700s through annexations from other towns.

THE FIDDLENECK: One disputed parcel was a rocky, unpromising strip at the end of Flanders Road. Early in Westborough's settlement the flinty pioneer, John Belknap, chose this land on which to build his cabin and established a healthy respect between himself and the Indians. The



Benjamin Fay house, 38 Nourse St., c. 1765.

Photo by Victor Hamburger.

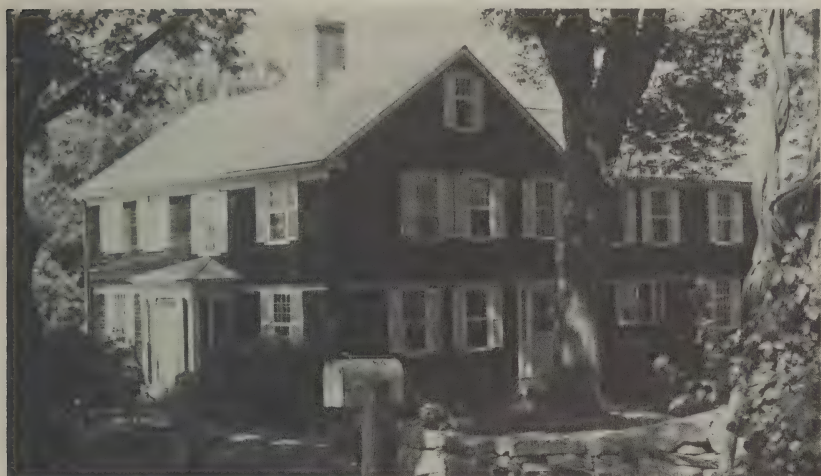


Westborough until 1766.

From History of Westborough by DeForest.

parcel, a 300-acre strip called the Fiddleneck, was part of the Thomas Mayhew grant awarded in 1708 by the General Court. Framingham soon laid claim upon the land, but John Belknap challenged their rights. Although most of the parcel was annexed to Southborough in 1786, it was not until 1835 that the claims were settled and sixteen acres of the Fiddleneck annexed to Westborough. Perhaps because of these disputes the land was dubbed "Contention Glade." The feisty nature of the settlers of that area, in fact, is reflected in the naming of Flanders Road, since their constant disputes over boundaries and other matters were likened to the continual warring over Flanders in Europe.

FROM SUTTON: In 1728 Westborough annexed 1900 acres from Sutton that included most of the present angular southern projection of town, that is, Warren Street, Hopkinton and Upton Roads.



David Warren house, 64 Warren St., c. 1795.

Photo by Paula Skog.



Thomas Whitney house, 56 Nourse St., c. 1736.

Photo by Paula Skog

FROM UPTON AND SHREWSBURY: Land from Upton in 1754 and an odd-shaped parcel, the "Shrewsbury Shoe," in 1762 were added to Westborough's land. Although about 70 acres from Shrewsbury were added at this time, one of the inhabitants of the Shoe, Thomas Whitney, desired to remain a Shrewsbury resident. He refused to annex his 40-acre farm to Westborough and during his lifetime this property represented a small island of Shrewsbury surrounded by Westborough. In 1793 his son, Elijah Whitney, decided to join the ranks of Westborough citizens, and the farm became part of the Hundredth Town.

The Hundredth Town Incorporated

Those lands not claimed by individual grants were settled by early residents of Marlborough. Thomas Rice, who by 1675 had built a garrison house on West Main Street (the High School property), is thought to be the first settler of present-day Westborough. Others followed his lead to develop lands in "Chauncy" and dutifully trudged the six miles to the Marlborough meeting house for weekly worship and periodic town meetings.

These hardy pioneers withstood the attacks of the Nipmucs in the King Philip's War in 1675-1676 and were faced in 1688 with the decision to rebuild the temporary meeting house, which had replaced the one burned by the Indians. Residents of Chauncy made it clear that they were tired of their long walks and wished the new meeting house built closer to their settlement. Although their proposition was rebuffed, it planted the seed of the formation of a separate town in the western section of Marlborough. The Marlborough town meeting ruled that such a division of the town be granted, "if the westerly part of the town shall see cause afterward to build another meeting house, and find itself able to do so, and to maintain a minister"

In 1702 Henry Kerly presented the General Court with a petition signed by twenty-three men asking that lands including most of Westborough, Northborough, Shrewsbury, and Boylston be set apart as a town. This petition was not granted, but in March 1709 the settlers of Chauncy received from the Proprietors of Marlborough a grant of fifty acres of land "for the benefit of the ministry." Most of this land lay on Powder Hill (Lyman School) off Milk Street and to the west on Great Middle Meadow near Lake Hocomocco.

After peace was signed with the Indians in 1713, the dream of a separate town seemed closer to reality, and petitions for incorporation of the new town filled the General Court. Finally the petition of Isaac Amsden, signed by sixty-six others, was submitted, read, and accepted in the General Court

in the fall of 1717.

On November 18, 1717 the town of Westborough was incorporated; it was the hundredth town to be established in Massachusetts. The new town was bordered by Marlborough on the east, the Indian praying town of Hassanamisco (Grafton) on the west, Sutton on the south, and Lancaster on the north. The town's name derives from the fact that it was the western section or "borough" of Marlborough. Southborough at that time was the southern section of Marlborough. Northborough was the northern portion of the original town of Westborough until it was incorporated as a town in 1766.

There were twenty-seven families—about forty settlers—living within the perimeters of the new town of Westborough. Their names were carefully recorded in the Bible of the town's first minister, Reverend Ebenezer Parkman, as follows:

Thomas Rice

Charles Rice

John Fay

Samuel Fay

Thomas Forbush

David Maynard

Edmund Rice

David Brigham

Capt. Joseph Byles

James Bradish

John Pratt

John Pratt, Jr.

Thomas Newton

Josiah Newton

Hezekiah Howe

Daniel Warren

Increase Ward

Benjamin Townsend

Nathaniel Oakes

Samuel Goodnow

Gershom Fay

Simeon Howard

Adam Holloway

Thomas Ward

Joseph Wheeler

Isaac Tomlin and James Eager are thought to also have had families in town at this time. The young male settlers who were not heads of families were: John Maynard, James Maynard, Aaron Forbush, Jacob Amsden, Eleazer Beaman, and Jotham Brigham.

The first town meeting, moderated by Thomas Forbush, was held in the Forbush Tavern on January 15, 1718. Elected selectmen at that time were Thomas Rice, John Fay, and Simeon Howard, with David Maynard constable. The first order of business was the construction of a meeting house since by Massachusetts law all towns had to be provided with a meeting house and a minister.

The building of the Meeting House began on Powder Hill the next October on land given by John Maynard and Edmund Rice. More than two years later on November 4, 1720, the first town meeting was held in the new building, even though there were no seats or floor. A plain and simple building, this meeting house was the heart of political and religious activities until the 1740s. By that time Westborough had grown to more



David Maynard house, 4 Park St., c. 1699.

Photo by Victor Hamburger



James Bradish house, 50 Flanders Rd.; c. 1706, front c. 1795.

Photo by Paula Skog.



Hezekiah Howe/Thaddeus Cobb house, 221 Milk St., c. 1714.

Photo by Paula Skog.

than 100 families, and the Meeting House proved too small to accommodate the entire congregation.

The thirty-seven families in the northern section of town became a separate precinct in 1744 and worshipped in individual homes. In 1749, with the construction of the second Meeting House on Main Street for the remaining families in town, the activity in Westborough was shifted from the Lake Chauncy/Powder Hill area to the present town square.

The First Church and Reverend Parkman

The development of the town and the first church are intertwined, for the founders of Massachusetts Bay Colony firmly believed in the establishment of a church-state. In fact, a law in 1692 stated that every town should be constantly provided with "an able, learned, and orthodox minister, or ministers, of good conversation, to dispense the word of God to them."

The new town of Westborough wasted no time in beginning its meeting house and searching for a spiritual leader. The Meeting House was raised on October 21, 1718, the Town voting "to procure Six Gallons Rhum and a Barrall and half of Syder for the raising of the meeting house (sic)." When completed in 1724, the building was a simple, unadorned rectangle, forty feet long and thirty feet wide.

The Reverend Daniel Elmer was the first minister called to Westborough, but probably because of a dispute over his theological qualifications, he was never ordained. The new Meeting House was near completion when Reverend Ebenezer Parkman was ordained there on October 28, 1724. Born in Boston, Reverend Parkman (1703-1782) had graduated from Harvard in 1721 at age eighteen, and in 1724 he married Mary Champney. The young couple settled in the parsonage on Powder Hill where five children were born to them before Mary's untimely death in 1735. Reverend Parkman later married Hannah Breck; together they had eleven children for a total of sixteen offspring under the Parkman roof.

The Congregational Church was organized in Westborough on October 28, 1724 with twelve members: David Brigham, Joseph Wheeler, James Ball, Thomas Forbush, John Pratt, Edmund Rice, Isaac Tomlin, John Fay, David Maynard, Thomas Newton, James Bradish, and Isaac Tomlin, Jr. Within five years the congregation had grown to eighty-nine members, requiring an expansion of the Meeting House.

After the families in the northern section of town separated from the main church in order to worship closer to their homes, the eighty-eight remaining families decided to build a larger, centralized meeting house. They voted to erect it "on the north side of the County Road where now a pine bush grows, about 25 or 30 rods easterly of the burying place."



Second Parkman Parsonage, 11 High St., c. 1750.

Photo by Paula Skog.

This Meeting House was completed in 1749, and located on Main Street between Milk and Summer Streets, it served as the nerve center of the town.

The new Parkman parsonage was built in 1750 within easy walking distance, near the corner of High Street and East Main. The congregation grumbled that the number of glass panes in the parsonage was a needless expense to pay from their taxes. This parsonage was moved in 1867 up the hill to 11 High Street on the corner of State Street, where it stands today.

Reverend Ebenezer Parkman served as Westborough's spiritual guide and respected advisor for fifty-eight years. He watched the town grow from an English settlement on the fringe of civilization to a prosperous village in the independent United States. Parkman's insights into the life of these times are recorded in his daily journal, now housed at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester. Harriette M. Forbes edited and published excerpts of this diary, as did Francis Walett.

Reverend Parkman died in 1782 at age seventy-nine and is buried in Memorial Cemetery. In describing his ministry the *Worcester Spy* of December 16, 1782 states, "He was a gentleman and a scholar, a good divine and a real christian. He was a lover of religion and of learning: a lover of the college in Cambridge (where he had his education) and an honour to it; a lover of good men & given to hospitality. . . . He had a

singular talent in private conversation; his communications were always edifying & ministered grace to the hearers."

Village Life: Taverns

As in other New England towns, the taverns in Westborough often served as the center of social and political activity. These public houses were located on major roadways and were required by their licenses to furnish provisions and refreshments for the entertainment of travelers as well as stabling for the travelers' horses. In the days of the stagecoach the strategically placed taverns offered weary travelers a much needed break from the jolting ride over rough roads. Here passengers could gain a hearty meal and a night's rest as well as a change of horses.

Before the advent of local newspapers, the tavern was the arena where news and gossip were exchanged. Townspeople would gather to hear news of the outside world from those passing through or just off the stage. At the tavern local pundits could voice their views on politics, current events, or philosophy and be assured of a rousing debate. The landlords for the most part were public-spirited citizens who took an active part in town government.

In many communities the tavern offered the only large room for gatherings outside of the meeting house. It was here that young people gathered for dances and assemblies and their elders for dinners and receptions. Auctions, an occasional court session, and recruiting also took place in the tavern.

There were six taverns in Westborough, each with a distinct personality. Many were located on the old Boston-Worcester Road that entered town from Southborough at Smith Street, continued along East Main to Bellows Road (Friendly's) and Route 9, then veered off at Oak Street to Powder Hill. The Amsden-Gale Tavern and the Bruce Tavern were on East Main Street, the Forbush and Wesson Taverns along the Turnpike (Route 9), and the Gregory-Brigham Tavern and the Blue Anchor Tavern near the town square.

The Forbush Tavern

Captain Samuel Forbush (1674-1766), one of the first settlers of Westborough, built the Forbush Tavern at the northwest corner of Lyman Street and the Turnpike in 1699. Forbush had served in the French and Indian Wars and in 1723 was elected Selectman. The Forbush Tavern was the first in Westborough and served as the rendezvous for those intent on separating their settlement, Chauncy Village, from Marlborough. In fact, it was here on January 15, 1718 that the first town meeting was held



Forbush Tavern; Lyman St. and Route 9, c. 1699, burned 1973.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

for the newly incorporated town of Westborough.

The Forbush Tavern was kept by seven generations of the Forbush family. The public house contained a living room, a tap room, and a dance hall on the second floor along with sleeping rooms. In 1779 a tremendous barn was built across the street to accommodate fifty horses for stagecoaches.

After the Boston-Worcester Turnpike was built in 1810, the Forbush Tavern became a major stop on the stagecoach route. Lambert Forbush was the landlord at that time, but from 1820 to 1825 Silas Wesson operated the tavern as well as a post office there. The tavern was sold in 1828 to Silas Howe who ran it until 1834 when the railroad came into the town square, sounding the death knell for stagecoach travel. Howe closed the Forbush Tavern, and it became a private residence. A committee was formed to move and restore the tavern in the 1970s, but the building burned on July 10, 1973 before it could be renovated.

The Bruce Tavern

In 1719 Lieutenant Abijah Bruce (1698-1774) arrived in Westborough and opened a tavern in the house he built at 210 East Main Street. A soldier in the French and Indian Wars, Bruce served as moderator of town meeting in 1735. As member of the committee to build the second meeting house in 1749, the innkeeper provided the rum for that building's raising.

Abijah Bruce worked not only as a tavern keeper but raised cattle,



Bruce Tavern, 210 E. Main St., c. 1719.

Photo by Paula Skog.

horses, and sheep on his land. He often sold his stock to drovers who stopped at the Bruce Tavern on the way to market. In 1750 the tavern was mortgaged to Captain Stephen Maynard and seems to have ceased business soon after. People still stop at the tavern, but now it is for fresh vegetables at the Uhlman's Farm Stand out front rather than for accommodations within.

The Amsden-Gale Tavern

Jacob Amsden, grandson of Sir John Rutter of Sudbury (Rutter's Brook), also came to Westborough in 1719 and built a tavern on East Main Street facing Smith Street. As a descendant of the aristocracy, Amsden catered to the elite, and soon the Amsden Tavern became known for entertaining royal magistrates, officers, and government officials traveling between Boston and Worcester.

The pretty Amsden daughters, Abigail and Lydia, may have been a major attraction; their comeliness was praised by Chief Justice Samuel Sewall, who was a frequent guest at the tavern. In 1745 Lydia married Thaddeus Gale and three years later Abigail married his brother Abijah. Upon Jacob Amsden's death, the tavern passed to the two daughters; in 1752 Abijah and Abigail became the sole owners. After Abigail's death in 1771, Abijah Gale married Susannah Allen and continued to operate the tavern another thirty years.

Abijah Gale (1727-1804) was known for his convivial nature and active interest in town affairs. He served as town constable, school com-



Amsden-Gale Tavern, 250 E. Main St., c. 1720.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.



Amsden house, 225 E. Main St.; ell c. 1705, main house c. 1830.

Photo by Paula Skog.

mittee member, highway surveyor, and chairman of the selectmen (1778-1780). Under his supervision the Gale Tavern changed its allegiance. Instead of welcoming those loyal to the Crown, Abijah opened his doors to those with a thirst for independence. Gale was one of the seven brave

men in January 1773 to sign a letter stating Westborough's commitment to independence in response to an appeal from Sam Adams. The tavern became the rendezvous of the town militia, which trained in a nearby muster field, then retired to Gale's for refreshment.

Reverend Ebenezer Parkman referred to the Gale Tavern in his diary. On September 2, 1774 he wrote, "This morning was ushered in with Alarms from every quarter . . . 72 of our Neighbors marched from Gale's (tis said) and others are continuing . . ." The signal was sounded to warn of the British march on Concord, but it proved a false alarm. On April 19, 1775, the Westborough militia once again marched off to protect Concord but were too late to fight in that battle.

The Gale Tavern was well-appointed with a cheese room, dairy house, cider house, wine cellar, and carriage house. It is at the Gale Tavern that George Washington stopped for rest and refreshment on July 2, 1776, on his way to take command of the forces at Cambridge. Susannah Gale often told all who would listen about her serving General Washington her best wine and cakes as he rested in her home. According to her story the General arrived from Worcester on horseback but left Westborough in a carriage as local children cheered and tossed flowers.

The Amsden-Gale Tavern closed early in the 1800s but part of the original tavern can still be seen at 250 East Main Street.

The Blue Anchor Tavern

Thomas Rice, Westborough's first settler, decided to sell his house on West Main Street (the High School) in 1708 to get ransom money to redeem his son Asher, who had been kidnapped by Canadian Indians in 1704. Rice sold his home to Thomas Newton who in turn deeded the farm to his son Abner in 1732.

Abner Newton had married Vashti Eager, daughter of Northborough tavern keeper James Eager, in 1731. They decided to operate a tavern, so moved the farmhouse to the south and added a second story. The Newtons' tavern gained fame of a dubious sort in 1737 when Hugh Henderson was caught stealing from their tavern and became the first person executed in Worcester County.

After Abner Newton's death, Vashti married Benjamin Wood in 1753. Deacon Wood was the son of a tavern keeper in Woodville, and the couple soon built their establishment into the popular Blue Anchor Tavern. The tavern flourished from 1753-1789, particularly as a hotbed for political activity leading up to the Revolution.

The response to Samuel Adams' appeal for unity against British tyranny was written at the Blue Anchor in 1773. Under its roof the Committee of Correspondence met and described the infringements of Westborough



Blue Anchor Tavern, 108 W. Main St., c. 1732.

Courtesy of Kristina Allen.

citizens' rights by the British in 1774. Secret meetings were held there with the selectmen and the Committee of Correspondence.

Once the American Revolution had broken out, the Blue Anchor played even a greater role. The tavern was on the road taken from southern New England to Boston. As militia groups marched east to join the troops in Cambridge, Vashti Wood stopped the soldiers, insisting that they take rest and refreshment at her tavern. It is said that Colonel Israel Putnam and Benedict Arnold stopped en route from Connecticut and that General Henry Knox rested his men and changed oxen there on his journey to bring cannon to Dorchester Heights in 1775.

The Blue Anchor continued as a tavern until the late 1780s. It was moved from the present High School property in 1820 to make room for the new home of Major John Fayerweather. The Blue Anchor is reported to be located currently at 108 West Main Street.

The Gregory-Brigham Tavern

When the meeting house was erected in the town square in 1749, a "nooning house" where the congregation could stop for warmth and refreshment between sermons was built across the way. In 1800 Nehemiah Miller built a tavern on this property facing South Street and selected Captain Daniel Gregory (1766-1822) of Framingham as its innkeeper. Besides the first floor tap room and dining room, there was a grand ballroom on the second floor with benches built in along the walls. A gala ball was



Gregory Brigham Tavern, South St., c. 1749.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

held there to dedicate the Gregory Inn attended by all the “society” in the county.

In the 1820s Gregory’s successor, Dexter Brigham, and his wife built a solid reputation for fine food and hospitality so that the popularity of their tavern grew. Stagecoaches from Worcester and Dudley stopped there,



Westboro Hotel, corner of South and Brigham, c. 1853, razed 1934.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

and the coming of the railroad in 1834 brought even more loyal patrons.

Mrs. Brigham's cooking, especially her mince pies, became renowned and attracted many a notable customer like Harrison Gray Otis. The Quakers are said to have stopped at the tavern en route to Providence for their quarterly meetings. Townspeople looked upon the appearance of the Quakers' chaises before the tavern invariably as a precursor of rain.

In 1849 a portion of the tavern was moved and remodeled as a residence; the remainder became part of the Union Block on South Street. Otis Vinton added the remainder of the Brigham Tavern to the Westboro Hotel in 1853. The Westboro Hotel continued to be a popular lodging place, particularly at the height of the shoe and boot business in the 1870-1880s. As many as 125 people boarded regularly at the Westboro Hotel at the corner of South Street and Brigham Street (Sunoco Station).

Before the hotel stood a huge elm tree where the "mosquito fleet" or local idlers would sit for hours. The Westboro Hotel was razed in December 1934. According to the December 2 *Worcester Telegram* of that year, "The old hotel register had the names of such celebrities as Lily Langtry, Lillian Russell, John L. Sullivan, Robert Fitzsimmons, and Tom Sharkey."

The Wesson Tavern

With the development of the Boston-Worcester route (Route 9) as the first turnpike in the country, entrepreneurs began to see Westborough as an ideal place to set up business. Captain Silas Wesson built a large tavern on the north side of the turnpike across from Park Street in 1825. That first year the Wesson Tavern gained renown when General Lafayette stopped to dine there on his way to lay the cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument.

Others were attracted by the location as well. Nathan Fisher bought land near the tavern and opened a large shop with his brother-in-law Joseph Lothrop in the 1820s. This double Federal home can be seen today and has recently been named to the National Register of Historic Places. Fisher also built a thread factory in the area, where he employed the first steam power in Westborough. With the shop, factory, and tavern the area became a thriving center for Westborough and soon earned the name "Wessonville."

Its prosperity was short-lived, however, since the 1834 advent of the railroad shifted activity to Main Street and the town square. In 1840 the Wesson Tavern became the site of a young women's seminary, and in 1852 Dr. John Hero established his Willow Park Sanitarium there. Dr. Hero opened the Willow Park Seminary for Women in 1867, added a seminary



Wesson Tavern, N.E. corner Park St. and Rt. 9; c. 1825, razed 1950.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

for young men in 1872, and finally closed his business in 1876. The Wesson Tavern was bought by the state when Lyman School was built in 1885 on Powder Hill. The old tavern was razed in 1950.

Village Life: Mills

Mills were essential to early Westborough for it was here that the townspeople brought corn and wheat to be ground, wood sawed, and cider pressed. There were three major mill sites in town: Piccadilly in the southeast near Cedar Swamp, Mill Road on the Assabet, and Rocklawn on Flanders Road.

Piccadilly

The first mill established was that of Jonathan Forbes (1684-1768), who bought land near the town reservoir in 1714 and settled on Spring Road. Forbes built a dam and sawmill on the nearby brook running from the reservoir to Cedar Swamp.

The water power of that brook attracted another miller, John Graves, who came from Sudbury to build a mill between Morse and Belknap Streets near Hopkinton Road. A young mechanic, Cornelius Bigelow, married



Piccadilly Mill, Hopkinton Road, c. 1825.

Photo by Paula Skog.

Joshua Mellen (1765-1858) and Joel Butler at ages 20 and 23 were eager to try their hand at making their blacksmith shop a success. Through their skill and energy they built a thriving business and were able to buy fifty more acres plus the Graves-Bigelow house seven years later. Joel Butler sold his interest in the business to Mellen in 1795.

Joshua Mellen worked tirelessly turning out farm and household tools for every job. He was both blacksmith and machinist, skilled in working wood, iron, and even gold and silver. The shop was enlarged, and trip hammers, lathes, and other machinery installed. In one transaction, ninety hoes that Mellen fashioned were bartered for ninety acres of land.

As business improved Joshua Mellen added a store to the east end of his home on Morse Street. Here customers could purchase everything from plows to buttons, scythes to beeswax. The residential area near the mill became so prosperous that the section on Morse, Belknap, and Hopkinton Roads was known as "Piccadilly" after the wealthy section of London. Great parties and dances were held in the homes in Piccadilly to which only the elite were invited. Until the railroad appeared in the center of Westborough in 1834, Piccadilly vied with the town square and Powder Hill-Wessonville for influence.

Joshua Mellen served Westborough not only as an artisan but as selectman and representative to the General Court as well. His son Joshua inherited the shop and continued the business with the help of village blacksmith Charles Hardy.

Corning Fairbanks

Another distinguished resident of Piccadilly was Corning Fairbanks (1801-1887), who had appeared on the scene by 1825. He operated a mill on the brook running to Cedar Swamp near Hopkinton Road. Soon all the job work for the Westborough sleigh manufacturers was done at the Fairbanks sawmill, and most of the boxes used in the straw hat and boot industries were produced there as well. Fairbanks also became an important sleigh manufacturer in Westborough; during 1875 there were 200 sleighs produced in his shop. His son Benjamin took over the business upon his father's death in 1887, renaming it B. N. Fairbanks and Company. He continued to make sleighs until the turn of the century.

Mills on the Assabet

The Assabet River also attracted millers to its water power. Jonathan Whipple and his son Francis Whipple settled in Westborough around 1732. They operated the corn mill built earlier by Oliver Ward on the Assabet River and also farmed seventy acres. Francis inherited the mill and farm at 59 Fisher Street in 1757 and continued its operation, although his main interest was law.



Parker Mill house, 55 Mill Road, c. 1780.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

Mill Road

Reverend Parkman notes in his diary under June 1780 that he attended the raising of a grist and saw mill by a Mr. Rider. This is the mill on the

Assabet, which gave Mill Road its name, and it may have been located on the site of the old Whipple mill. Isaac Parker bought this mill after 1780 and later his sons Joel and Gardner helped him run the business. Joel Parker continued to operate the mill after his brother had turned to clockmaking as a trade.



Rocklawn Mill, c. 1880's.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

Rocklawn

Another section of Westborough known for its water power was Rocklawn at the end of Flanders Road. First settled by John Belknap, the land became developed into a grist mill by Abner Prentiss around the late 1800s. An 1878 map shows grist and plaster mills at Rocklawn where limestone was ground into fertilizer and lime. Further down along the same river large textile mills were developed in Southborough's Cordaville area.

The only mill left standing is the Piccadilly Mill on Hopkinton Road, which is believed to be the original Bigelow-Mellon mill. Part of the mill on Mill Road has been refurbished for residential use.

Village Life: Town Personalities

Breck Parkman, Shopkeeper and Librarian

Breck Parkman (1749-1825), the eleventh child of Reverend Ebenezer Parkman, saw to the town's material needs while his father looked to Westborough's spiritual ones. As a young man Breck learned the carpentry trade and in the 1770s used this skill to build and outfit a shop on

East Main Street near the corner of Summer Street.

The shop was an immediate success; townspeople were fascinated by the array of goods Parkman stocked from Boston. In 1773 the store added a lending library to its shelves. As Westborough's first librarian, Breck Parkman built up the book collection and learned bookbinding to maintain it.

The Parkman store grew with the town. In the 1790s Breck's brother-in-law, Judge Elijah Brigham, joined as a partner. Parkman and Brigham built a new store on the south side of Main Street at the rear of the present Central Block. Entries in the Parkman and Brigham day book dating from 1792-1794 list the following articles in inventory: "Shoes, Hats, Bottles, crockery, Bibles, Spelling Books, Writing paper, Blank Books, Sole Leather, Boards, Shingles, Harnesses, Veal, Pork, Butter, cheese, New England Rum, Buckles, Shaloon, Buckram, Fustian, teapots, candlesticks, Flour." Some of the items foreshadow the early industries of Westborough. The hats listed may well be straw hats fashioned by Westborough women and children as a home industry in town and the sole leather raw material for those who made shoes.



Breck Parkman's store, built 1798, burned 1868.

Courtesy of Annie Fales collection.

In 1798 Breck Parkman was once again sole proprietor of his store, and he built a long two-story building on the west side of Main Street as his new shop. Upon his death in 1825, the store passed to his son and grandson, both Charles Parkman. The Parkman shop was sold to Rufus

Harris in 1842 and again in 1853 to Davenport and Burnap. Westborough customers continued to patronize the shop until it burned in a disastrous fire in 1868. On the site of the Parkman Store the Post Office Block was erected the next year; the block has now been transformed into the Guaranty Bank.



Francis Whipple house, 59 Fisher St., c. 1732.

Photo by Paula Skog.

Francis Whipple, Counselor

Francis Whipple (1700-1787) worked his family farm at 59 Fisher Street, but his main interest was in law. As a counselor in town, Whipple acted as justice in a number of local cases, settling minor estate problems or representing clients in court. He served Westborough politically as town treasurer (1744), town clerk (1760s), and selectman (1752, 1762-1765, 1770). In 1744 Whipple helped negotiate the separation of Northborough into an independent precinct.

Francis Whipple was Westborough's representative to the Massachusetts General Court during its most tumultuous time, in the years before the Revolution when the American colonists were enraged by increasing British oppression. His fellow Westborough patriots sent him off to the General Court in 1765 with firm orders to oppose the imposition of the Stamp Act. During this time Francis Whipple became acquainted with John Hancock and John Adams who visited the counselor in his Westborough home.

**Tall clock made by
Gardner Parker.**

Photo by Paula Skog.



Dr. James Hawes, the First Town Physician

In 1764, at age twenty-five, Dr. James Hawes (1739-1821) came to Westborough from Wrentham and bought the former home of Cornelius Cook at 114 East Main on the northwest corner of Lyman Street. He became an influential man in the community, serving various terms from 1775 to 1786 as town selectman, moderator, and town clerk. He also served as the town constable during the Revolution.

From the doctor's office on the west side of the house Dr. Hawes tended the town's ill, dispensing the medicines he mixed himself as well as extracting teeth. In addition he served as Westborough's justice of the peace and held court for minor cases in his home, at the Blue Anchor Tavern, or at Abijah Gale's tavern. For his services Dr. Hawes often received goods in barter—everything from rum to pudding pans. He also had horses for hire and rented out rooms in his home for lodging.

Dr. Hawes and his family were among the founders of the Baptist Church in Westborough and donated some of their garden as the site of the first Baptist church built in Westborough in 1816.

Dr. Hawes was a gregarious, intelligent man, known for his hospitality and sense of duty.

Gardner Parker, Clockmaker

At age five, in 1777, Gardner Parker came to Westborough with his family and no doubt began to work at an early age in the gristmill his father, Isaac Parker, had purchased on the Assabet. Gardner must have shown mechanical ability while young, for at age fourteen he was appren-

ticed to the Willard family in Grafton.

The Willards were destined to become the most famous clockmakers in the country, known particularly for their invention of the banjo clock. Parker, as their apprentice, learned the basics of clockmaking from these talented craftsmen; he was schooled in the complex mechanics, pendulums and weights, clockfaces, and cabinetry. In 1790 Gardner Parker completed his apprenticeship with the Willards and returned to Westborough.

He set up a small shop at the corner of Main Street and Blake Street and began making clocks. These clocks were built on special order as a luxury item; often Parker was paid on the barter system with brass, iron, and wood—raw materials of his trade. Parker built country versions of the sophisticated Boston tall clocks, sometimes importing clockfaces and metal parts from England. He would complete from ten to twelve clocks a year; the last known serial number on a Parker clock is #200.

Westborough benefitted from Gardner Parker's many skills, for in 1809 he built and installed the first organ—on six months' approval—to be used in the Meeting House. Parker also built at least two town clocks, one for Shrewsbury and one for Westborough. Westborough's town clock hung in the second Meeting House until it was removed and placed in the first Town Hall built in 1839.

Gardner Parker used his skills to create not only clocks, but also guns, wooden cabinets, and most likely locks. Since the parts he used had to be filed and the lathe manually operated, Parker devised a way to facilitate the work through the use of water power. Using the family sawmill as inspiration, he built a two-story, two-room factory at the end of Heath Street near a tributary of the Assabet.

This may have been the first attempt at a factory in Westborough. Parker worked approximately ten years, from 1805 to 1815, to construct and equip his factory, but the design suffered from a basic flaw. Its water wheel was too heavy and large; the waterflow from the brook did not have the power to activate it. Disheartened, Gardner Parker took his own life in 1816 at age forty-four. The site of his failed dream was called "Parker's Folly" and more recently "Folly Lane."

Notorious Town Characters

Life for Westborough's first settlers was filled with many unknown terrors as well as the familiar ones of Indian raids, plagues, or droughts. Witchcraft was the convenient explanation for much of the phenomena, and the pious citizens of Westborough were constantly on guard against those who might be in league with the Devil. Individuals who scoffed at society's conventions were regarded with a mixture of suspicion, fear, and

respect. The stories whispered about these nonconformists were passed down from generation to generation. Westborough had two such notorious characters—Tom Cook and Ruth Buck.



Tom Cook/Dr. James Hawes house

114 E. Main St., c. 1732.

Courtesy of Annie Fales collection.

Tom Cook

Tom Cook, Westborough's Robin Hood, saw himself as the "Leveler" since he balanced the local economy by giving to the poor what he stole from the rich. Noted for his cunning and personal charm, Tom Cook was born on October 6, 1738 in the "plaster house" at 114 East Main Street on the west corner of Lyman Street. He was the son of the blacksmith Cornelius Cook and his wife Eunice Forbush Cook.

Legend has it that as a child Tom became deathly ill, and his mother—at her wit's end—cried out, "Only spare his life, only spare his life, and I care not what he becomes!" Miraculously the child was spared and grew into a handsome scoundrel who made his livelihood by his sharp wit and agile fingers. The Cook family left Westborough to settle in Wrentham in 1750, but Tom Cook chose to wander the New England countryside, stealing from carefully chosen, affluent victims. Supposedly Cook also managed to collect protection money from those who did not relish a visit from the thief.

Tom Cook kept none of this booty for himself; he doled it out generously to those less fortunate than their neighbors. He would slip into one

prosperous farmer's kitchen and steal a pudding cooking on the fire, only to drop it into the pot of a hungry family down the road.

One story has Tom climbing into a bedroom and selecting the very best featherbed. Wrapping the comforter in a sheet, he climbed out the window, went around the house, and knocked at the door. When the mistress of the house answered the door, Tom Cook asked politely if he might leave his bundle with her for safekeeping. The woman refused to have either Tom Cook or his bundle in her house, so off he went with a clear conscience to present a sick comrade with the featherbed.

Although he was often arrested, Tom seemed little interested in mending his ways. Reverend Parkman recorded in his journal for August 27, 1779, "The notorious Thomas Cook came in (he says) on Purpose to see me. I gave him what Admonition, Instruction, and Caution I could. I beseech God to give it Force! He leaves me With fair Words—thankful and Promising."

In his old age, Cook no longer could rely on his wits to live. His last years were spent on the Upton Road farm of Levi Bowman who boarded the town's poor. Tom Cook died near the age of ninety and is thought to be buried in an unmarked pauper's grave in town.

More of his exploits are described in *The Leveller* by Jackie Greene (1984) and *The Hundredth Town* by Harriet M. Forbes.

Ruth Buck

When bread didn't rise, cakes burned, and butter wouldn't churn, the superstitious Westborough women were certain witchcraft was to blame. They fastened their suspicions on Ruth Buck whose sharp tongue and quick temper made her seem a likely witch. Ruth Buck, born in 1742, first appears on town records in 1763 when the town appropriated money for the support of her baby and herself. Occasionally she worked as an itinerant seamstress, but she was never truly welcome in Westborough homes. The colonists believed she commanded a spiteful, destructive power, and Ruth Buck exploited rather than dispelled their fears.

It is said that when Ruth Buck met Joseph Belnap from Flanders Road going to the Boston market with a huge basket of eggs, she asked for a few. Belnap refused to sell her some since the eggs were closely packed and counted. Ruth Buck retorted, "Well, as you please, but you'll never get those eggs safely to market." Sure enough, before the end of the journey, the backboard of the wagon mysteriously jarred loose, and the basket of eggs crashed to the ground, smashing every single egg.

Ruth Buck always wore a scarf covering much of her head that was believed to conceal her nicked ears. Local superstition dictated that farmers nick their animals' ears if they thought them bewitched—to release the

evil spirits within. Westborough folks claimed that same mark would then appear on Ruth Buck's ears.

Toward the end of her life Ruth Buck was a charge of the town who was "knocked down at auction" to the individual offering to board her for the least amount. She died penniless in 1834 at age ninety-two.

Westborough in the Revolution

A militia composed of all men aged sixteen to sixty was established soon after Westborough was settled. In the early years the militia mustered and drilled mainly to protect the town from hostile Indians, particularly during the King Philip's War (1675-1678), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), King George's War (1744-1748), and the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Many of the town's young men enlisted to fight in these campaigns and received invaluable military training from their British officers.

Captain Stephen Maynard, as a young man, received a royal commission as lieutenant in the King's army and from 1743-1763 led campaigns in Canada, at Crown Point, Lake George, and Fort Ticonderoga. After peace was declared between England and France in 1763, Captain Maynard returned to his 500-acre farm on Milk Street to enjoy his role as the wealthiest landowner in Westborough. He served as selectman and as Westborough's representative to the Massachusetts Legislature from 1768-1777 and 1785-1789. Part of his tenure was as member of the rebel Provincial Congress, set up despite British objections in 1774-1775.

The burden of unjust taxation and repression by the Crown fanned the flames of rebellion among the colonists, an emotion that exploded with the passage of the Stamp Act in March 1763. Westborough citizens would not under any circumstances surrender their rights as free-born Englishmen.

In October 1765 Westborough's moderator Deacon Jonathan Bond instructed Representative Francis Whipple "... that the Stamp Act is an Infringement upon those Rights; therefore we cannot be active in putting our Necks under such a Greivous Yoke," and he added that Whipple should "promote, and Readily Join in all such Dutiful Remonstrances and humble Petitions to the King and Parliament and other Desent measures as may have a tendency to obtain a Repeal of sd Stamp Act (sic)..."

The Stamp Act was repealed the following May, but the resentments and repression continued. In January 1773 in response to a letter from Boston's Samuel Adams asking the town's views on the colonists' plight, Westborough appointed a committee of seven to give a report. They wrote, "... Under ye present critical and alaruming Situation of our publick affairs There is a loud call to Every one to awake from Security & in Earnest strive to secure his Liberty, lest he politically perish... For no Dought ware

WESTBOROUGH MINUTEMAN PARK

DEDICATED TO THE FORTY-SIX MINUTEMEN
FROM WESTBOROUGH WHO FOUGHT
IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

EDWARD BRIGHAM, CAPTAIN	JOSHUA CHAMBERLAIN, 1ST CORPORAL
THOMAS BOND, 1ST LIEUTENANT	EDWARD ENTWISILL, 2ND CORPORAL
MOSES WHEELOCK, 2ND LIEUTENANT	JOHN FAY, 3RD CORPORAL
NATHAN TOWNSEND, 1ST SERGEANT	CALEB HARRINGTON, 4TH CORPORAL
JAMES GODFREY, 2ND SERGEANT	JAMES GOULD, 1ST DRUMMER
JOHN HARRINGTON, 3RD SERGEANT	RICHARD TEMPLE, 2ND DRUMMER
JOHN BAILL, 4TH LIEUTENANT	NATHANIEL CHAMBERLAIN, FIFER

AMASA MAYNARD	WILLIAM SPRING	BARNABAS BRIGHAM
THADDEUS WARREN	DANIEL ADAMS, JR.	ELI HARRINGTON
SOLOMON MAYNARD	JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN	SAMUEL BELLOWES
SAMUEL THURSTON	ASABEL BIGELOW	AMSDEN GALE
JAMES BELLOWES	HENRY MARBLE	DANIEL WARREN, JR.
JOSEPH BOND	SAMUEL WILLIAMS	BRECK PARKMAN
ELEAZER WHEELOCK	PHINEAS BRIGHAM	SETH BRIGHAM
PHINEAS HARDY, JR.	PHINEAS GLEASON, JR.	DANIEL HARDY, JR.
FORTUNATUS MILLER	JOSEPH MCCULLOCH	SIMEON FORBES
JAMES MILLER, JR.	EDWARD BRIGHAM	BENJAMIN WHITNEY
BENJAMIN BALL		JOHN MCCULLOCH

JULY 4, 1975



WESTBOROUGH BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

tyranny is Exercised, Opposition becomes a duty. As our fathers could, so can we plead our Loyalty; we have been, and now are, Ready to spill our Dearest blood in Defence of our King, Religion & Constitutional Laws. We cannot but look upon it a hard Trial, yea greater than we can bear, if we cannot Give full proof of our Loyalty Otherwise than by sacrificing those Rights & Liberties which we prize beyond Life itself (sic). . . ." The letter was signed by Phineas Hardy, chairman; Captain Benjamin Fay, Daniel Forbes, Hananiah Parker, Ebenezer Maynard, Abijah Gale, and Dr. James Hawes.

In 1774 all towns were ordered to form a militia company that, drilled and armed, could be ready to fight at a minute's notice. A company was formed and Captain Edmund Brigham (1733-1806) elected its commanding officer. Other officers chosen were Thomas Bond, Moses Wheelock, and Seth Morse. The militia trained hard under Captain Brigham, who led his men with the firm hand of a born leader. The Gale Tavern, close to Brigham's farm on Walker Street, was chosen as the militia's headquarters.

Close to midnight on September 1, 1774 Captain Brigham was awakened by a horseman shouting, "The British are marching to Concord!" Shooting his musket three times into the air, the Captain alerted his men and summoned them to battle. Amid great commotion seventy-two Westborough militiamen gathered and soon were on the march ready



Daniel Warren/Phineas Haskell house

200 E. Main St., c. 1710

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

to fight to protect the store of arms at Concord from the Redcoats. Upon learning that the farmers of Worcester and Middlesex Counties were approaching, the British retreated to Boston, so the incident turned out to be a false alarm.

At this time the Westborough militia included a cannon company since the town had voted in June 1774 to purchase a "field piece, four pounder" as well as hundreds of pounds of gunpowder, flint, and lead. At the same time a second Committee of Correspondence — made up of Jonathan Bond, Daniel Forbes, Thomas Bond, Hananiah Parker, Dr. James Hawes, Lieutenant Edward Baker, and Joseph Harrington — was appointed to report any British mistreatment of Westborough citizens.

The town had refused to grant any extra bounty to "Minutemen" on the grounds that every member of the Westborough militia was expected to serve at a minute's notice and to do his utmost to defend liberty. On April 19, 1775 the Westborough militia was called upon to prove its mettle. Upon news of the British attack at Lexington and Concord, forty-six Minutemen gathered at the Meeting House and received arms, rations, and a supply of powder, flints, and hatchets. Commanded by Captain Brigham they marched through Lexington, reaching Charlestown that night.

Over the next seven years the Westborough militia fought bravely in many of the Revolutionary battles including Bunker Hill, Dorchester Heights, Bennington, Saratoga, White Plains, Philadelphia, Monmouth, and Newport. They enlisted for several months at a time under the commands of Captain Moses Wheelock, Captain Seth Morse, and Lieutenant James Godfrey. By the end of the war there had been 381 enlistments from Westborough; even considering that a number of these were re-enlistments, the town of less than 1,000 made a gallant contribution to America's fight for independence.

Those left behind also contributed for there were continual pleas for supplies. Townspeople supplied money and provisions such as shoes, cheese, cattle, grain, and rye. The women of Westborough spun, wove, knit, and sewed blankets, coats, and stockings to send to the Continental Army. A receipt signed by Westborough soldier Henry Marble noted with thanks that the blankets woven by Westborough women had arrived safely at Valley Forge during the fateful winter of 1777.

The bravery of the Westborough militia was commemorated during the Bicentennial celebrations of 1975-1982. The Westborough militia was reactivated by order of the Selectmen in 1973. Beginning at Concord and Lexington in 1975 and continuing to Yorktown in 1981, the Westborough men re-enacted about 100 Revolutionary battles. The Westborough Can-



Cannon Company, Westborough Militia, Memorial Day 1984.

Photo by Paula Skog.

non Company demonstrated its skill in cannon competitions and re-enactments from Bunker Hill to Savannah.

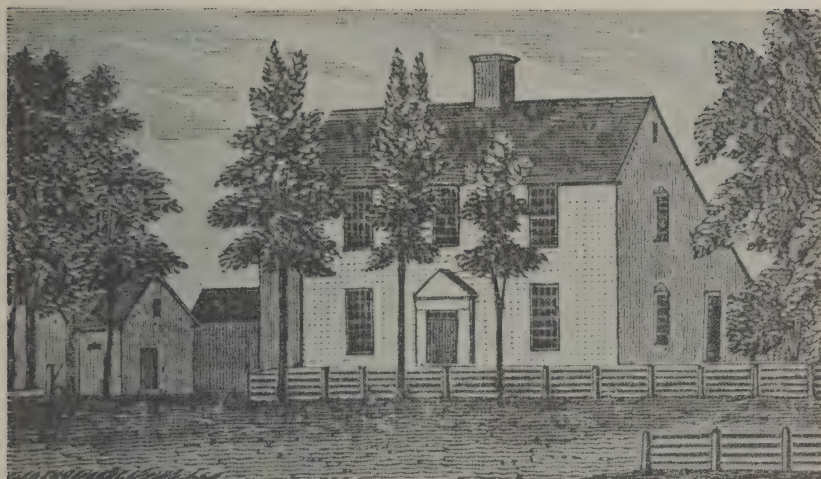
Eli Whitney, Father of American Mass Production

Eli Whitney, born in Westborough on December 8, 1765, is renowned as the inventor of the cotton gin, but it is as the originator of mass production in America that his genius had the greatest impact on modern society. Young Eli grew up in the turmoil of the American Revolution in a home that stood at the present 36 Eli Whitney Street. His mother was the enterprising Betsey Fay, one of the first straw hat producers in Westborough. Eli's father, a mechanically inclined farmer, augmented his income by making hoe and axe blades in the workshop near the house.

Young Eli soon demonstrated his mechanical aptitude in his father's workshop. During the Revolution he recognized the growing demand for nails and persuaded his father to set up a forge for their production. After the war the resourceful young man became a manufacturer himself by devising a process to draw nails into hatpins, thus popularizing a new style.

Eli Whitney, Jr. was clearly not destined to become a farmer. His mother died when Eli was twelve, and although his stepmother opposed his further education, eighteen-year-old Eli announced his decision to go to college. To earn his tuition he taught for five years at Leicester Academy, then in 1789 entered Yale at the seasoned age of twenty-three.

Upon his graduation, Whitney accepted a job as a tutor in Georgia near



Eli Whitney's birthplace, c. 1728, razed 1854.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

his classmate Phineas Miller. At Mulberry Grove, the home of Catherine Greene, Whitney learned of the South's urgent need for a machine to remove the seed from green-seed cotton. Much of the southern land had been worked out; green-seed cotton was the only type that could be grown in the vast uncultivated interior of the South.

Whitney's agile, mechanical mind tackled the problem, and in a few days he produced a surprisingly effective – and simple – model of a cotton gin. With Phineas Miller as a partner, Whitney returned to New Haven to set up a cotton gin factory. President George Washington signed Whitney's first cotton gin patent on March 1794, and almost overnight Eli Whitney became a celebrated national figure. The simplicity of the gin design and the partners' attempt to monopolize ginning the cotton, however, spelled trouble for the new enterprise. Farmer-mechanics in the South easily copied Whitney's design and built their own gins – there were 300 such gins operating in 1797. The endless court battles over patent rights and a fire in the New Haven factory brought Whitney near financial ruin.

Undaunted, Eli Whitney proposed a revolutionary idea to the Secretary of the Treasury in 1798. He offered to manufacture an order of 10,000 to 15,000 muskets, an unprecedented number, for the U.S. Government by using water-powered machinery. Up to that time, small arms production was a tedious and complicated procedure with each musket part hand-made by a single craftsman. Faced with an impending war with France



Eli Whitney

and England, the Government took a chance and signed the contract with Whitney.

Whitneyville, near New Haven, became the site of a new mill village; it was here that Eli Whitney built and equipped his arms factory and homes for laborers. He first identified the processes essential in making muskets—such as planing, drilling, and filing—and assigned separate groups of workers to master each procedure. This division of labor was a new concept to American industry. It was as if Whitney envisioned the factory itself as a tremendous, streamlined machine.

The ingenious Yankee designed machines to plane, file, and drill, which were simple to operate, even for the unskilled worker. To ensure that every part could be copied precisely, Whitney devised drilling by pattern or templets, filing by jigs, and milling of irregular forms. Since each part

could now be duplicated exactly, the parts were interchangeable. The muskets produced at the Whitney factory could be made faster and cheaper than handmade muskets. Emphasis in industry shifted from the skilled artisan to the machinist. With this division of labor and standardization of parts, Eli Whitney introduced mass production to the United States.

The Whitney Arms Company prospered, but Eli Whitney continued to live as a bachelor in a small cottage near his mill. To carry on his work, he sent for and trained his nephews from Westborough: Philos, Elihu, and Eli Whitney Blake. Finally in 1817 at age fifty-one Eli Whitney married Henrietta Edwards. He became the father of three daughters and a son, but died eight years later on January 8, 1825 at age fifty-nine. He is buried in New Haven, Connecticut. The Whitney business was managed by Philos and Eli Blake until Eli Whitney, Jr. — who was four when his father died — could assume control. The Whitney Arms Company grew to be one of the most important in the field, and it was sold to the Winchester Repeating Arms Company in 1888.

Eli Whitney profoundly affected the growth of the new American nation. His cotton gin helped the United States become the world's largest producer of cotton; in 1825 cotton exports were valued at \$37,000,000. This economic growth strengthened the South and made slavery a necessary component in the burgeoning cotton industry. Whitney's concept of mass production using interchangeable parts and division of labor spread quickly through the American industrial scene. Mass production not only revolutionized factories but also provided work for the unskilled immigrant laborers who soon flocked to the United States.

Whitney's original home no longer stands, but to commemorate this ingenious native son, Westborough has erected the original doorstep to his home at the site of his birthplace on Eli Whitney Street. Eli Whitney's true memorial, however, is the American assembly line.



THE TOWN PROSPERS

1800 - 1900

The Boston-Worcester Turnpike

The Boston to Worcester highway has put Westborough in the mainstream of commerce and transportation ever since the thoroughfare was laid out in 1673 to benefit those traveling from Cambridge to Worcester and west to Brookfield. The route branched from the Nashua Trail in Wayland, then passed through Framingham, Southborough, Westborough (part of Marlborough), and Shrewsbury into Worcester. Sections of this trail are referred to in colonial records as early as 1643.

This well-traveled road entered Westborough from Southborough along Smith Street, continued along East Main Street until Bellows Road (Friendly's), then ran along the present Route 9 to Lyman and Oak Streets. Here it followed Oak Street to Powder Hill, crossed the Assabet River and Milk Porridge Plain, then met the Post Road from Marlborough. (The Boston-Worcester Post Road was laid out ten years later in 1683.)

Many colonists followed this path by foot or horseback, and to meet their needs, taverns sprang up along the route. A branch ran off this highway over Park and Milk Streets to Westborough Square where it merged with Indian trails to the north and south. Royal magistrates and other court officials traveled this route to the Connecticut court in Woodstock, stopping no doubt for hearty refreshment along the way.



Boston-Worcester Turnpike near Otis St.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

By 1806, however, greater speed and convenience were demanded by travelers. The General Court was petitioned to lay out a smoother, straighter highway between Boston and Worcester. The General Court responded by creating the Worcester Turnpike Corporation. The determination to create a straight highway was costly, for the most direct route passed through swamps, over hills, and through thick forests. The expense involved proved ruinous to William Howe of Worcester, who built the Causeway section near the Route 30 intersection (Tom Foolery's) three times, only to have it sink out of sight in the swamp the day it was to be accepted by the turnpike authorities.

The new Boston-Worcester Turnpike was completed in 1810, with toll gates erected in four sections of the highway. The day of fast travel over a straight road arrived as stagecoaches, pulled by four or six horses, bounced along its lanes at speeds of twelve to fifteen miles an hour. Four stagecoaches ran daily between Worcester and Roxbury. For a fare of \$2, as many as twelve passengers would be jammed into the stage and five or six seated on top. The ride was dusty and rough. It must have been with great relief that the passengers alighted at the Gale, Bruce, Forbush, or Wesson Taverns in Westborough. The average number of passengers traveling along the Turnpike in 1831 was estimated at 22,360 a year.

The Worcester Turnpike Corporation dissolved in 1841, and the Turnpike was turned over to the towns. Westborough selectmen did not maintain the road to the extent that the Corporation had, and upon the arrival

WILLOW PARK EXPRESS!

This Carriage will leave Willow Park, and Westboro' Village, precisely as follows:

Will leave Willow Park, at 7.52 A. M., and 2.15 4.30 P. M.

" Westboro' P. O., at 8.45 A. M., and 3.57 4.45 P. M.

FARE.

To and from Depot, with Baggage,	-	25	cts. each way
All other Passengers,	-	12	" "

Ten tickets for \$1.00, to be found at Dr. HENRY'S Store, or at the Office at Willow Park.

J. H. HERO.

Coach schedule from the Willow Park Express.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

of the railroad to Westborough in 1834, the Turnpike lost much of its importance.

The Turnpike once again became a major transportation artery when the Boston-Worcester Street Railway ran its high speed trolley cars along its route from 1903 to 1931. Much of the Turnpike was dirt road at the time, and large farms bordered the highway within Westborough's town lines. This bucolic scene was to change dramatically when Route 9 was constructed over the Turnpike in 1930 and 1931, bringing an onslaught of traffic and activity to the area once more.

History of the Railroad

The Boston-Worcester Railroad roared into Westborough Square in October 1834 and, in a cloud of steam, ushered in a new era. The rustic village life gave way to a period of burgeoning industrial growth. The railroad enabled local factories — producing straw hats, boots, sleighs, and bicycles in the 19th century and grinding wheels, lingerie, shoes, and textiles in the 20th century — to receive raw materials and ship finished goods all over the country.

The train tracks ran right through the heart of Westborough. They entered town from the east along the edge of Cedar Swamp, ran between Brigham and Union Streets, across the Square to Summer Street, along



Railroad crossing from Brigham St. to Summer St., prior to 1899.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.



Steam locomotive at present Westborough Depot, c. 1900.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

Milk Street, then parallel to Fisher Street, across Arch Street, and into Shrewsbury. Since the tracks brought the train alongside the Meeting House on the corner of Main and Summer Streets, it became impossible to hold church services or town meetings there with any semblance of decorum. So in 1837 the Meeting House, stripped of its tower and bell,

became a shopping arcade, which served the town until 1890.

The arrival of the first train to Westborough was the occasion of great celebration. The village assembled and dutifully listened to speeches of railroad officials and politicians. Printed in the booklet "More Old Houses" are the recollections of Harriet Clark about the first train in town: "The people were then invited to ride a few miles down the track, and the primitive coaches of various designs were quickly filled to overflowing, the more venturesome youngsters even swarming on the roof of the cars, and all were carried who could possibly gain a foothold."

Westborough was the railroad's western terminus for nine or ten months until the summer of the next year. Clark's account continues, "Trains were at that time very unreliable in their trips, and as the crudely constructed locomotives frequently became demoralized, horses were kept at each station to be used for motive power in an emergency. . . . Merchandise purchased in Boston for towns in this vicinity was shipped by rail to Westboro and thence taken by team to its destination. It was no uncommon sight to see hogsheads, barrels and packages of goods lying about the common for days, awaiting transportation to neighboring towns."



Early depot — Brigham St., prior to 1899.

Courtesy of Ray Welsh.

Boston and Albany Railroad:

Trains from **Westboro** run as follows:
 For New York via Norwich, 6.43 p. m.
 " " " Springfield, 8.25 a. m., 2.56, and 6.43 p. m., changing cars at Worcester, lower station.
 For Albany and the West, 8.25 a. m., 2.56 and 6.43 p. m. Change cars as above.
 For Greenbush, Kinderhook, Chatham, Pittsfield, Chester, Westfield, Springfield, Palmer, West Brookfield, 8.25 a. m., 2.56 and 6.43 p. m. — Also West Brookfield, Palmer and Springfield, 5.41 p. m. Change cars as above.
 All other stations between Worcester and Springfield, 8.25 a. m., 2.56 p. m., 5.41 p. m., change as above.
 All other stations between Springfield and Pittsfield, 4.25 a. m., and 2.56, 6.42 p. m., change as above.
 All other stations between Pittsfield and Albany, 5.25 a. m., change as above.
 Pittsburg and all stations on R. C. & F. R. R., and North of Pittsburg via So. Framingham, 7.28 a. m. and 2.05 p. m., change cars at So. Framingham.
 Grafton and Worcester, 8.25 a. m., 2.56 and 5.41 p. m. (also, Worcester, 6.43 p. m.)
 Southville, Cordaville, Ashland, So. Framingham and Natick, 7.28 and 10.13 a. m., 2.15 and 6.36 p. m.
 Milford Branch, 7.28 a. m. and 2.15 and 6.36 p. m. change cars at So. Framingham.
 Wellesley and Grantville, West Newton, Newton, Brighton, 7.28, 10.13 a. m., 6.36 p. m.
 Auburndale, Newtonville, Allston, 10.15 a. m., 6.36 p. m.
 For stations below Grantville, passengers may also take train at 2.15 p. m., changing cars at Natick.
 Boston, 7.28, 10.13 a. m., 2.15 and 6.36 p. m.
 Trains for **Westboro**
 Leave Boston at 7 a. m., 1.30, 4.30 and 5.30 p. m.
 " Worcester at 7.30 a. m., 1.40 and 5.20 p. m.
 " Milford, 7.10, 11.40 a. m., 4.25 p. m. Change cars at So. Framingham.
 C. O. MURRELL, Supt., Springfield.
 A. FITZEL, Asst. Supt., Boston.
 May 2, 1870.

1870 train schedule.

From the Saturday Evening Chronotype.

The depot was built on the east side of Brigham Street near the square (behind the present Hickox Building). The nearby Brigham's Tavern became a popular resting and dining place for travelers. Those journeying by train to the mineral springs in Hopkinton often stopped at the

tavern. The Westboro Hotel eventually replaced Brigham's Tavern, and it too became a popular watering spot. The Whitney House, built in 1881 on West Main Street, also catered to rail travelers.

Brown's Livery Stable behind the Whitney House and Ford's Livery Stable across from the depot always had men on hand to meet the trains and bring weary passengers to the town's hotels. Salesmen would often come to Westborough by train, rent a room at a local hotel, then hire a carriage (hack) from a livery stable to make sales calls in neighboring towns.

The railroad brought not only commerce to town, but a measure of excitement as well. Pedestrians, especially children, had to be warned to keep clear of the tracks and skittish horses kept under control. More than once unwary residents were killed while trying to cross the tracks after dark. A schoolhouse was built on High Street in the mid-1800s to safeguard those pupils who would otherwise have to cross the tracks to attend the Grove Street schools.

The 17th of June Bridge

The railroad bridge on Fisher Street is known as the "17th of June Bridge" after a train wreck that occurred there on June 17, 1840. A trainload of Whig party members was traveling to Worcester to attend a large rally for their Presidential candidate, William Henry Harrison. About two miles out of Westborough center near the Fisher Street bridge, a freight train and the passenger train — running on the same track — collided head on. The June 12, 1895 Westborough *Chronotype* reminisced: "The passenger train going up (to Worcester) was made up principally of box cars, fitted up with temporary seats and crowded with passengers, among whom were many from this town. The two locomotives bounded into each other with such force as to crush their front iron work and thus become so completely imbedded in each other that a separation was not made until they reached the repair shop in Boston. The water tank of one was thrown upon the boiler of the locomotive to which it was attached."

"The collision caused a general smash-up of both trains, and a number of passengers were more or less injured, but no one was killed or known to have died. The injured ones were gathered together and placed in the rear car of the up train, which was but little injured, and by the passengers pushed back to the village, where Brigham's Hotel was thrown open as a hospital. . . ."

Early Freight Service

By the turn-of-the-century the Boston and Albany Railroad controlled the railway service and had built up an extensive passenger and freight



Train Depot — East Main St., c. 1899.

Courtesy of Nancy Sundstrom.

business. To straighten out the track, thus increasing its speed and efficiency, the Boston and Albany relocated the track in 1899 from the center of Westborough to its present elevated site on East Main Street.

Many local businessmen considered the relocation the worst plan for the town and the best for the railroad. They feared that trains would speed through Westborough without stopping and consequently freight service would dwindle. However, a spur track for freight continued to run to the freight depot on Brigham Street (now part of Bay State Abrasive's warehouse). The factories on Brigham, Union, Beach, and Milk Streets were still served by railroad siding. Lumber was delivered to the Bartlett Box Factory, grain to Nason's, meat to the Armour warehouse, and hides to the tannery. From the 1920s on Bay State Abrasives became an important freight customer with track running right into its factory yard.

The early teamsters would meet the freight train with their horse-drawn wagons and deliver the shipments all over Westborough. Sid Apts recalls, "All the merchandise for the stores, all the coal, all the goods that went in and out of this town went over the railroad. I can remember my father had two double teams, six days a week, hauling nothing but merchandise and groceries to the stores back in town. In back of the depot was a platform where the milk train would come and pick up the 20- and 40-quart milk cans. Farmers would bring in their milk in the morning and pick up the empty cans the train dropped off. It was a tremendous operation, no doubt about it."

Passenger Service

When the tracks were moved in 1899, a new passenger and Railway Express depot was built on the East Main Street site. Sid Aptt tells of the passenger trains he remembers in the 1920s: "This town had great railroad service. Everybody used the railroad to commute to work. After World War I we had a train going out of here to Boston at 6:20 a.m., 7:05 a.m., and 8:05 a.m. Everybody knew who took the 'eight-five' — they were the individuals like the bankers who didn't have to get to work until 9:00 a.m. There were also two commuter trains to Worcester, the 7:15 and the 7:30 a.m. It was just the reverse at night: three locals out of Boston and two out of Worcester. There was also what we called 'the midnight' that left Boston at 11 p.m. for the theater crowd."

"The passenger trains would seat close to one hundred people. The seats were a kind of velvet, and in the very early cars I remember they had stoves, but around World War I they changed that and heated the cars with steam from the engine."

The passenger train provided transportation to Boston and Worcester for Westborough commuters, shoppers, and college students until 1960. Harold Hickox, a train enthusiast and former transportation chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, commuted to Worcester by rail in the 1950s. "When you took the commuter train from Westborough, you knew everybody on the train. The cars were comfortable with leather seats, and there was a big smoking car—an advanced idea for those days," says Hickox.

The depot on East Main Street was divided into two sections—the Railway Express Office that faced East Main Street and the passenger waiting room. Those shipments that needed to be delivered quickly, such as mail and flowers from Westborough greenhouses, would be sent Railway Express. These express cars were connected to the passenger trains and provided a faster but more expensive means of shipping. The Railway Express agent, Fenno Carter, would wheel his wagon up to the express car upon arrival, unload the packages, and make deliveries all over Westborough.

Hickox remembers the depot with nostalgia: "The people at the Express Office were always very friendly. On the way to the waiting room you'd walk by big boxes of carnations or baby chicks being shipped out. When you went into the station, the first thing you saw was a huge central steam radiator, about five feet in diameter, that was always hissing. To the left was a newsstand with papers and candy and to the right was the ticket office. There was always the chatter of the telegraph since the railroad used telegraph then. They would telegraph Boston or Framingham to see

if the train had left, was on time, or to see that a lost child got off at the right station. It was a wonderful place."

The railroad employed many local people in shifts — seven days a week for the eighteen hours a day the station was open. Although Westborough continued to have about thirty-five commuters taking the train to Boston or Worcester, the Boston and Albany decided that its passenger service was not profitable enough to continue. The last passenger train stopped in Westborough on March 31, 1960, despite the objections of the selectmen and many residents.

Interest in returning commuter service to Westborough continued and reached a height in the 1970s. The Chamber of Commerce and town officials worked hard to interest state officials in the idea, but the timing or politics were not conducive to its success. So the Westborough depot remains closed after more than 125 years of passenger service in town.

Modern Freight Service

The freight service continued under the control of the New York Central Railroad. In February 1964 in Westborough there was a dramatic derailment of twenty-two freight cars carrying wheat for the Soviet Union. Each car contained 2,000 bushels of wheat, and the loss of the Soviet-bound cargo was estimated at \$80,000. F.B.I. agents were sent from Boston to help the railroad police determine if sabotage was involved, since at that time longshoremen and the maritime union had declared a boycott against loading grain headed for the Soviet Union. The cause of the derailment, which occurred near Bay State, was finally determined to be a broken wheel assembly in the twenty-ninth car.

By 1969 Penn Central had acquired the local railway and become interested in the concept of "intermodal" transportation. The idea of a freight terminal on Flanders Road, which could tie into the interstate highway system, was pursued. Developer Wallace Yaffe purchased over 100 acres that is now used as an unloading yard for Chrysler and American Motors Corporation cars brought into New England by train. In 1974 a federally-funded access road was completed from Route 9 to Flanders Road to promote interaction between railroad and highway transportation. The automobiles unloaded from the train in Westborough are now loaded onto trucks to be distributed throughout the region.

The Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) took over the line in April 1976. Conrail now owns the track between Framingham and Springfield; Amtrack owns the track between Springfield and Washington, D.C.; while Massachusetts controls the line from Boston to Framingham. At present there is one Amtrack passenger train passing through Westborough daily on its way from Boston to Chicago with stops in Framingham and

Worcester. One of the largest freight customers exporting from this region is General Motors in Framingham, which regularly sends carloads of automobiles to the west.

There are about ten trains in each direction daily running through Westborough. Several Westborough manufacturers continue to import raw materials by freight train and have built private tracks or siding running to their factories. Large trains deliver the freight cars bound for Westborough to the freight yards in Framingham; then smaller, short haul engines deliver or "spot" the cars to the factory sidings. After the freight car has been unloaded, the factory notifies the railroad to send a short haul engine to pick it up.

Cumberland Farms receives carloads of canned goods on a track that runs right into its regional warehouse on Flanders Road. The freight car can then be unloaded inside and the goods distributed by truck to the company's stores throughout New England. The local Cumberland Farm bakery receives carloads of flour, which are pumped into their silo, as well as carloads of fructose, which are transferred into tanks for use in the production of soft drinks.

As mentioned earlier, Chrysler automobiles are shipped from Windsor, Ontario, and unloaded in a Flanders Road yard operated by MG Convoy to be transferred to piggyback trucks. Next along the line is Bay State Abrasives, which continues to receive carloads of sand and feldspar used in its abrasive grinding wheel production. Corrugated Paper Company on Milk Street has had its railroad siding since 1942. It imports tons of kraft liner board from Georgia each week for use in its manufacturing. Dana Film on Otis Street also has its raw material, polyethylene resin pellets, delivered by freight car.

Before the 1950s the majority of shipping was done by rail, but in the 1980s transport by truck has dominated, and the use of the railroads is minimal. However, since a railroad car can carry 85,000 pounds, it remains an attractive carrier for large quantities. With the deregulation of the railroad in 1982, the trains have been able to compete with the trucking firms more successfully.

Straw Hat Industry

Straw hat manufacture—initially done at home by women and children—was one of Westborough's first major industries. Enterprising women would gather winter rye in June, soak it, cut it into sections, then suspend the straw over a brimstone fire (sulphur) to cure it. The bleached straw was then split in preparation for braiding. Children were often drafted to braid the straw; a typical quota would be ten yards a day. For

this, shopkeepers would pay two cents a yard and for very fine braid, three to four cents a yard. Often the straw braid was used as currency at the local shops; there would be a cash price and a higher "straw" price for an article.

In the earliest days Westborough women not only braided the straw but sewed the bonnets as well. An ambitious and ingenious young woman, Elizabeth (Betsey) Fay, is said to have been the first to produce straw hats in Westborough. Born in 1742 in the home of her grandfather, Captain John Fay, at 172 West Main Street (Wilkinson's), Betsey was determined to use her business sense to build up a dowry. She organized other young women to sew bonnets from the straw that had been grown, bleached, and braided on the Fay farm. Although the elders in the community were alarmed that a young woman from a respected family was setting up in trade, Betsey Fay's business prospered.



Capt. John Fay house, 172 W. Main St.,; c. 1771, ell c. 1700.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

When Eli Whitney (Sr.), a sturdy farmer and blacksmith, came courting in 1762, Elizabeth refused him until her hat business and its profits were more substantial. Three years later on February 7, 1765, they were married and moved into a saltbox house on a nearby hill (on the site of 36 Eli Whitney Street).

On December 8, 1765 their first son was born, Eli Whitney, Jr., who became the inventor of the cotton gin and father of American mass production. Betsey continued to make straw hats; a wooden hat block said

to be carved for her by her son Eli is in the Westborough Historical Society. Young Eli also fashioned hat pins by drawing out nails in his father's blacksmith shop and is credited with promoting this new fashion in hats. Elizabeth Fay Whitney died in 1777 at age thirty-six, when her son Eli was twelve. She is buried with her husband under the Whitney monument in Memorial Cemetery on West Main Street.

Perhaps some of Betsey Fay's straw hats found their way to the first store in Westborough, established by Breck Parkman in 1773. No doubt straw hats and domestic braid were bought by the store, for when Breck's son Charles entered the business in 1805 he became interested in developing the straw industry even further. Charles Parkman built a small factory on School Street, and by 1810 a craftsman named Bayley Bird was making bonnets of domestic braid in the shop. This straw hat shop was continued a number of years by John and Jesse Brown.

Several other small straw shops flourished in Westborough, but the first major production wasn't undertaken until 1863 when Lucius Bates and James A. Parker rented an old boot shop on South Street and began the business that was to develop into the Westboro Hat Company.

Westborough Hat Factories

When inexpensive straw braid began to be imported from China and Italy in the 1850s and 1860s, domestic braid lost out to foreign competition, and the home production of straw braid ceased. The manufacture of straw hats on a large scale, however, was just beginning. In Westborough the hat factory established by Bates and Parker initially employed 250 women who sewed hats at home, twelve men, and thirty girls. Lucius Bates continued to produce hats in this South Street factory with a variety of partners (Smart, Wightman, Beaman) until his death in 1901.

Small shops continued to produce straw hats in Westborough in the 1860s, particularly those run by George Smalley, Chauncy Mitchell, Willard Comey, and Andrew Snow. In 1865 Westborough's straw hat industry produced 42,000 hats valued at \$34,000 through the labor of seventeen men and 262 women.

An enterprising Westborough inventor, Samuel Turner, brought out one of the earliest models of a sewing machine for straw and produced these machines in a factory on Summer Street from 1869 to 1871. His invention and later, more advanced models revolutionized the straw hat industry; one machine could do the work of thirty hand sewers.

The National Straw Works

The time was ripe for an entrepreneur with ambition and imagination



National Straw Works, built 1871, burned 1917.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.



Hat sewing room — National Straw Works.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

to make a mark in the newly mechanized industry. That man was Henry O. Bernard, a brash young salesman who had arrived in New York City from Richmond, Virginia without a cent in his pocket. He was selling imported braid to Westborough hat shops when he met George Smalley. Henry was impressed by Smalley's business ability and his interest in Bernard's dreams to build a modern hat factory. Bernard suggested they form a partnership at once.

The National Straw Works was incorporated in 1869 with Bernard and Smalley as partners. The large wooden factory they constructed on East Main Street (site of Forbes Community Building) opened in 1871. The first year the company employed 1,800 workers, and its sales skyrocketed to \$600,000. By 1873 four wings were added to the factory, almost doubling its capacity. Smalley dissolved the partnership in 1875 but continued on as manager.

In 1878 Bernard added a four-story brick structure adjoining the wooden factory. That year he also built on East Main Street the National House, a boarding hotel to house the seasonal straw workers. The work force was increased to 2,000, and in 1880 the company had sales of \$2.3 million. At that time the National Straw Works was recognized as the largest, most sophisticated factory in the world for men's, women's, and children's straw hats.

Bernard reorganized the company in 1885 to form the H. O. Bernard Company with many of the National Straw Works employees becoming stockholders. The fashion in straw hats was changing, however, and the large factories, based on mass production, could not keep pace with the demand for many different styles in small orders. Up to then, fashion had been determined by the five or six styles of plaster hat blocks used by the factories in one season. The large factories couldn't compete with the diversity offered by the smaller, more personalized shops. By 1899 the H. O. Bernard Company had closed its doors.

Bernard moved his furnishings and European art collection from his home on Bedford Avenue, New York, to the National House on East Main Street, which he turned into his private residence. He spent his retirement driving his favorite race horses around Westborough roads and fishing in Lake Chauncy. Henry Bernard died in 1916 at age seventy-seven.

The former National Straw Works factory and the National House were burned to the ground in the dramatic fire on October 12, 1917. At that time the Hassall Lace Curtain Company and Westboro Trunk and Bag were located in the facility.



National House/Westboro Inn, built 1878, burned 1917.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge.

The Westboro Hat Company

After 1900 the hat industry of Westborough focused on the Westboro Hat Company. When Lucius Bates died in 1901, his business became the Westboro Hat Company, Incorporated with George Genthner as president and William Bates as treasurer. Genthner took over the entire company in 1904 and purchased the Hunt Factory at 6 Phillips Street. He enlarged the factory by adding a story and built up a large business, employing at one time 300 workers. Genthner retired in 1916, having sold the company to Morrell Berg.

Sid Aptt, whose mother Louisa was an accomplished hatmaker, describes the factory, "Women were particularly involved in the factories in Westborough. During the winter girls would come from Maine, Vermont, and even Nova Scotia to work in the hat shops. They would live in the various hotels in town or with private families."

"My mother was a fine hatmaker. The women who sewed hats and had families could go into the factory any time they could. They'd do piece work and be paid by the dozen hats. Some kinds of hats would pay more because they were more difficult to sew. The women started the hats out by 'tipping,' sewing the little spot in the middle of the hat's crown. Women would sew the tips at home where they had these little sewing machines. The factory would supply the women with the thread and straw braid in their homes."

"Then the tips would be brought back to the factory, and the women



Westboro Hat Company, 6 Phillips St., est. 1904.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.



Westboro Hat Company dye house.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

would sew the braid on sewing machines. They'd take the sewn hats to another department and would block them. One of the trades for the men was 'whittling' hat blocks. These hat blocks were cast in plaster of Paris, then the whittlers would shape them with hand tools. The hats would be put on the hat blocks, and they would steam the hat on the block, which

gave it a permanent shape."

"From there the hats would go to different departments like the binding and trimming departments. Then they'd pack and ship the hats out in boxes; most of the hats went to New York." Aptt, who worked at the time as a teamster with his father, adds, "We'd go over to the hat factory five or six nights a week and run two or three double-horse teams to take the boxes of hats to the railroad to be shipped out."

Helen Young in a 1976 oral history recounts, "My grandfather, father, and uncles were straw hat dyers who came from England to work in the Upton and Westborough hat shops. It was a family trade, and they had their own formulas for dyes. The dye house on Phillips Street in Westborough was a big building; they also bleached the straw there."

"They made women's hats with lots of kinds of braid including chip braid (made of wood) and hair braid. I always had to wear a straw hat as a child—it was good for business. My father would bring a hat home, and we'd take it to the milliner, Miss Kitty Blake on South Street, to have it trimmed. She had quantities of flowers, ribbons, and feathers. You chose the trims you wanted."

The Westboro Hat Company continued under the management of the Berg brothers until 1929 when the company was bought by George B. Burnett. Burnett expanded by manufacturing felt women's hats as well as straw and employed as many as 300 in his business. The *Chronotype* of April 28, 1933 states, "Women's Panama hats and smart straws in the latest modes are turned out in quantity by George B. Burnett & Son. . . Many cases of men's (straw) hats made in Westboro go to the north central states, covering points as far west as the Mississippi River."

The Burnetts sold the hat factory to the Plymouth Hat Company, and it is believed that the hat shop stopped manufacturing sometime before World War II. In 1947 when this old hat shop on Phillips Street burned, hats were no longer being made there; instead a variety of small businesses leased different floors in the factory. The "Hat Shop Fire" destroyed the vestiges of one of Westborough's most important early industries.

Boot and Shoe Industry

The boot and shoe industry was also an important early industry in Westborough and continued to play a significant role in the town's economy until the late 1940s. J. B. Kimball is recognized as the first shoe manufacturer, beginning in a little shop on West Main Street in 1828.

For many years all the shoemaking was done by hand, slow and tedious work. The leather cutting, final crimping, and treeing were accomplished by a few men employed in the shoe shop; the bottoming, siding, and bind-

ing were done in homes. Many of the early Westborough farmhouses had small workshops beside them where members of the family worked on shoes and boots. In 1837, in fact, 360 men and 214 women were listed as employed in shoe manufacture; that year's production was 140,748 pair.

There were several small factories in town, including that of Thomas Stone on Cross Street, built in 1839. Urial and Willard Bragg manufactured shoes in the Old Arcade on Main Street, and Daniel Newton did a thriving business in his shoe shop on Cross Street from 1840 to 1860. Moses Newton, George Forbes, Otis Newton, and C. M. Holmes all numbered among the town's early shoe manufacturers.

J. B. Kimball, however, pioneered the industry, and in 1836 he built a large brick factory on the corner of Milk and Main Streets later known as the Cobb Block. Charles A. Rice, who was born in Westborough in 1840, wrote of his memories of the shop in the November 18, 1921 *Chronotype*: "It was then called 'The Brick Shop' and with the exception of the store on the Main Street side, was entirely occupied by J. B. Kimball and Company, as a boot and shoe shop. I do not remember many shoes being made there; the product was mostly long-legged boots, with brogans, and the day's work was generally hauled to the (railroad) station on a one-horse wagon. Shoemaking then, before the days of sewing, pegging, and other machinery, was very different from work done under one roof. Soles and tops were cut by hand and the making and bottoming put out. The work was done in small shops or farmers' kitchens, where



Former Kimball Shoe Shop/Cobb Block.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

the whole family who were old enough to sew the bindings took hold of the job. . . . After being returned to the shop the legs were treed and the bottoms scraped or finished, then packed and shipped to Boston. The sole leather department was in the basement; upper leather cutters, 'clickers' they were called, in the second story fronting Main Street; and treers in the attic."



Kimball Boot Factory, Brigham St., after 1860.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

J. B. Kimball and Company produced shoes in the old Brick Shop until 1860 when the company moved into a vacated furniture factory/steam mill on Brigham Street. The company was one of the first to adopt the new shoemaking machinery and bring the various shoemaking steps all under one roof. In 1868 Kimball's employed 250 workers and produced 3,600 pair of boots and shoes daily.

After fifty years of shoe manufacturing, J. B. Kimball's was disbanded in 1878. Other shoe manufacturers worked out of the old factory with varying degrees of success: from 1883-1885 Fogg, Shaw, Thayer and Company; 1885-1887 H. A. Royce and Company; and from 1887-1889 the Brooks and Wells Company. In 1886 it was reported that the factory employed between 300 and 400 people and produced about 1,000 cases of goods a week. By 1900, however, the Kimball factory had closed down.

The 1880s saw the rise of several smaller shoe factories in Westborough. In the old sleigh factory on the corner of Milk Street and Phillips Street (VeeArc), three shoe companies – Crain, Rising and Company (1879-81);

George Brigham and Sons; and Smith, Brown and Company—were located before the building burned in 1886.

By 1890 only two large shoe manufacturers remained in town: George Brigham and Sons and Gould and Walker. George Brigham had begun manufacturing shoes on his own in 1858 after working as superintendent in the shoe shops of Thomas Stone, Moses Newton, and Daniel Newton on Cross Street. His business was so successful that he built and expanded a factory on Cottage Street. John and Horace Brigham later joined their father in the business. In 1890 George Brigham and Sons employed 150 people and manufactured 24,000 cases a year at a value of \$325,000. In



George Brigham's home, 34 Church St., c. 1870.

Photo by Paula Skog.

BOOTS & SHOES—MEN'S CALF BOOTS from Westcott stock, a prime article, and every pair warranted. Ladies sewed, French Calf boots warranted; Ladies fine pegged boots; Ladies pegged boots, heavy, for winter wear, a bargain at \$1.50. Misses and children's boots sewed and pegged, of all kinds. **GOULD & CHAMBERLIN.** Main St., Westboro.

1867 Boot ad.

From Saturday Evening Chronotype.

1905 Horace Brigham continued the firm on his own and in 1913 had moved the shoe manufacturing to the top floors of the Gould and Walker factory at 50 Milk Street, where he continued the operation for a few years.

The large four-story wooden shoe shop at the corner of Milk and Phillips Streets was emblazoned "Gould & Walker" when it was erected in 1887 on the site of a factory burned the year before. William Gould and Melvin Walker had organized their shoe manufacturing firm in 1883, but in 1889 Gould withdrew from the business for health reasons. The firm continued to operate with Mr. Dunning added as a partner. In 1890 Gould and Walker employed 300 people and produced 35,000 cases of shoes valued at \$500,000. The company, however, was discontinued in the early 1900s.

During the 1920s the old Gould and Walker shoe factory became the home for other industries: underwear, cutains, and trunks, but in 1937 shoes were produced once again on the premises. The Rasmussen Shoe Company began to manufacture women's sports shoes, particularly the popular saddleshoe. The firm manufactured saddleshoes to suit all tastes – red and white, brown and white, blue and white – and gained a national reputation. It was also the first shoe factory in this country to manufacture wooden clogs, which became a popular fashion. Rasmussen shoes were shipped all over the United States to large chain department stores like Montgomery Ward's. The firm's business came to an untimely halt when the old factory was destroyed by fire on March 4, 1947. That fire



Gould and Walker Factory, corner of Milk and Phillips, built 1887.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

closed the chapter of the shoe industry in Westborough that had begun almost 120 years before.

Brick Manufacturing—Brick City

A tall brick tower can be seen from East Main Street on the crest of Gilmore Hill at Brick City; this was once part of the brick factory that flourished there since the early 19th century. Many of the early brick homes in town were constructed from local brick from this factory. An early builder, Jesse Woods—who lived at 174 Flanders Road—used Westborough brick to build several homes and schools in town including Rambler's Roost at 8 Flanders Road in 1817 and the Warren Colony at Lake Chauncy in 1820.

By 1837 Abijah Wood was producing \$1,160 worth of bricks annually at the East Main Street brickyard. Wood manufactured bricks on the site until 1869. At that time the brickyard was leased to produce the bricks for the construction of the Post Office Block on West Main Street (Guaranty Bank).

S. A. GILMORE, 

Bullding Brick
of all klns . .

Brick Manufacturer

Pattern Brick ; any desired Shape made to Order.

From 1899 Board of Trade Newspaper.

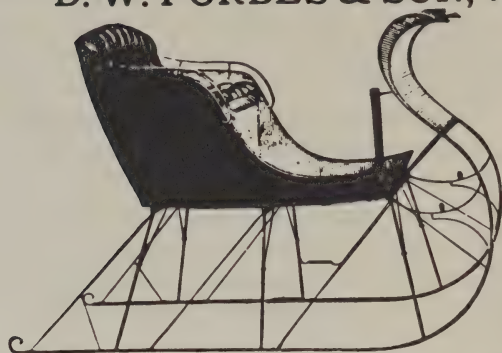
Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

The brickyard was run by Thomas Gilmore and his son Stephen after the Civil War. Records indicate that they manufactured bricks in 1872 and produced one and a half to two million bricks annually. Gilmore's brick production employed twenty to thirty men. Located on the hill at 220 East Main Street were five clay grinding pits, two brick sheds, a lumber shed, and two tenement buildings for workers. By 1906 Stephen Gilmore had retired, and the brick factory ceased to be listed among town businesses.

The Sleigh Industry

As the one-horse open sleigh on the Town Hall weathervane proclaims,

D. W. FORBES & SON, Westboro, Mass.



MANUFACTURERS OF
MEDIUM AND FINE
GRADES OF

Single and Double Portland,
Russian, Old Comfort, Trot-
ting, Square-Box, Business
and Pleasure.

SLEIGHS

ALSO

Traverse Runners, Sleigh and
Carriage Poles, Tip-Seat,
Depot and Grocers' Business
Sleighs, Pungs and Cutters.

Miniature Sleighs for Shetland Ponies a Specialty.

VANDYKE RED

is especially adapted for Agricultural Implements, Railway Cars and Carriage Work. Its great superiority over American
vermilion and all other colors used for the same purpose consists in the Beauty and Permanency of Shade.

1888 Sleigh ad from The Hub.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

Westborough was renowned as a regional center for sleighmaking. The town is thought to be the earliest producer of sleighs in Worcester County, and Westborough sleighs became known across the nation for their sturdy workmanship and fair prices. The height of the sleigh industry in Westborough was from 1870 to 1885, when approximately 4,000 sleighs were produced annually in nine sleigh shops. During these years there were nearly as many sleighs manufactured as there were people in town.

The Westborough sleighs were patterned after the Portland Cutter – a strong, light vehicle popular with owners of trotting horses. (A cutter was a one-horse sleigh with a single board seat for two or three passengers.) The Westborough version was not for status-conscious individuals, for an 1876 Westborough *Chronotype* observed, “Westboro has never been noted for its high-priced and finely finished sleighs but has a wide reputation for making a tasty, strong, well-finished sleigh for less money than any other place in the United States.”

As described in the *Chronotype* of November 11, 1874, “Sleigh business is remarkably good the present season, judging from the ready sale which Westborough sleigh makers find for their products. Our manufacturers have sold out their entire stocks made in early season and are now filling orders from all directions, with every prospect for a lively winter business. Westborough has been famous as a sleigh manufacturing town for many years, and annually turns out about 4500 sleighs.”

“They embrace all grades and weights of trotting and business sleighs,

in straight and circular backs, finely ironed, plainly and ornamentally painted, and trimmed in various shades of worsted, mohair, and silk plushes. Nine manufacturing establishments are here engaged in this branch



Daniel Forbes Factory, Summer St., built 1858.
Courtesy of C. Eddy, Westborough Illustrated, 1886.

SLEIGHS, SLEIGHS.

THE Subscribers, engaged in the manufacture of Sleighs, would inform the public, that they have on hand 150 Single and Two-seated Sleighs, of various Patterns. Also, a large lot of Double, or Two-horse Sleighs ; Travers Runners, of all kinds, suitable for one or four horses, which they will sell Wholesale or Retail at lower prices than can be found in the market, of equal quality. Call and examine for yourselves. Two doors South of Brigham's R. Road House.

BURNAP & HOWE.

Westboro', Nov. 3d, 1849

1849 Sleigh ad from the Westborough Messenger.
Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

of industry. They vary in prices from \$20 to \$65, with but few exceeding the latter sum, and about one-third of the whole number manufactured are sold at \$35."

The oldest and best known sleigh manufacturer in Westborough was Daniel Forbes. Brothers Daniel and Baxter Forbes built the first shop in town to specialize in sleighs in 1841 near the No. 4 Schoolhouse at the junction of Warren and South Streets. In 1858 the Forbes built a large sleigh shop on Summer Street (near 13 Summer) with Albert Burnap and Edward Brigham. Nahum Fisher was a partner in the shop from 1865 to 1875, but from 1885 on Daniel Forbes' only associate was his son Forrest. The Forbes' sleigh factory turned out about 1,200 sleighs a year in the late 1800s.

Although Daniel Forbes was the first to specialize in sleighs, many of the early carpenters and blacksmiths in Westborough made sleighs in the quiet winter months. As early as 1832, Westborough produced 400 sleighs valued at \$8,000. Many of these vehicles were made cooperatively. The carpenters built the wooden bodies, the blacksmith added the runners and braces, and the painters finished the work with a coat of paint and handsome trim. For their labor the carpenter and blacksmith each received two-fifths of the price and the painter, one-fifth.

Among the first sleighmakers in town were woodworkers Gardner Cloyes, Levi Bowman, Noyes Bryant, James Cochrane, Jonas Longley, Nathaniel Fisher, Albert Burnap, and Corning Fairbanks. Corning Fairbanks moved to the Piccadilly section of town on Hopkinton Road in 1825 and built a sawmill there. Here he cut the lumber needed by himself and others for sleigh manufacture. His son Benjamin Nourse Fairbanks continued in the sleigh industry after Corning's death in 1887.

Individual sleighmakers followed their trade on and off during the 1800s, but a sizeable sleigh factory was built in 1869 on the corner of Milk and Phillips Street by Charles Williams and D. O. Bacon. The Bacon and Williams factory continued until 1873, then was occupied by shoe factories until it burned in 1886. William H. Sibley and his brother Frank worked as wheelwrights at 8 Parkman Street; after the Civil War they produced about 200 sleighs annually, employing eight workers.

In January 1878 the local sleighmakers faced a severe blow to their industry. As part of its vocational training, the Westborough Reform School on Lyman Street began having its boys build sleighs. This move generated a heated debate in Town Hall in January of 1878. The local sleigh makers claimed that they could not compete against the State's advantage in buying large quantities of lumber and other supplies at low cash prices. They also feared that the sleighs made by the Reform School boys would be of in-



William Sibley's home, 13 Parkman St., c. 1844.

Photo by Paula Skog.

ferior quality and so devalue the reputation built up by their own "Westborough sleighs."

John Fayerweather, president of Westborough's First National Bank, is quoted in the *Chronotype's* coverage of the debate declaring, "The State had no right to establish any business that would interfere with the prosperity of any community, and in this case, it would have a tendency to ruin a very important industry in town." The State Reform School, however, paid little heed to the controversy and continued to produce about 300 sleighs a year into the 1880s.

In 1880 there were 2,100 sleighs made in Westborough: 800 by Daniel Forbes, 300 by Wilder Brown on Brigham Street, 300 by Frank Brigham near the depot, 150 by Corning Fairbanks on Hopkinton Road, 150 by the Sibleys on Parkman Street, 300 by the State Reform School, and 100 by other sleighmakers. Some of these smaller manufacturers in the 1880s were William Blake on the corner of South and Cottage Streets, Alfred Bryant on East Main Street, Frank Carleton on Brigham Street, Sidney Harris on West Street, John O'Brien on Brigham Street, and Patrick Maguire on Summer Street.

Most of the sleighs were shipped by rail to Connecticut and New York, but in 1882 six carloads were shipped by train to Minnesota. In 1890 there were six sleigh manufacturers active in Westborough: Alfred Bryant, Benjamin Fairbanks, Daniel Forbes, Patrick Maguire, John O'Brien, and William Sibley. By the turn-of-the-century, the sleigh industry had disap-



Sleigh in Westborough Center — 1880's.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

peared from town—not one sleigh manufacturer was listed in Westborough's 1905 town directory. The sound of sleigh bells was replaced by the sputter of the Stanley Steamer on Westborough streets.

Westborough During the Civil War

Westborough responded with patriotic fervor to President Lincoln's call to arms after the attack and surrender at Fort Sumter on April 14, 1861. Ironically, although the majority of Westborough residents strongly opposed slavery and the succession of the South, it was the invention of the cotton gin by Westborough's Eli Whitney that contributed to the South's strength and prosperity in the cotton industry based on slave labor.

In a resolution at a town meeting on April 25, 1861 (unauthorized by the state and later declared illegal), residents voted "That the town appropriate five thousand dollars to be expended in the purchase of uniforms, pay of men while drilling, and for pay in addition to the amount paid by the Government, when called into active service." A Military Committee was organized under Benjamin B. Nourse to carry out the resolution.

The Westborough Rifle Company was organized in April, 1861 and eventually 101 recruits enlisted for three years' service. From Westborough came fifty-six men, with the remainder of the company drawn from



**William Bacon, Chandler Robbins, Charles Fox,
Company K, Williamsport, MD.**

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

Southborough, Upton, Shrewsbury, Hopkinton, and Northborough. The volunteers drilled and marched in Westborough until they were mustered into service at Fort Independence, Boston, on July 16, 1861. The Westborough Rifle Company became Company K, 13th Regiment, Massachusetts Infantry, under Captain William Blackmer. When the train carrying the Westborough recruits to Maryland passed through Westborough on July 29, hundreds of townspeople were at the station to cheer them on and wish them godspeed.

Those remaining at home contributed to the war effort as well, particularly the women active in the town's Soldiers' Sewing Society. More than 200 women, armed with needles and thimbles, appeared at the Town



Winter quarters of William Warner, Mitchell's Station, Va. 1/27/1864.
Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

Hall on April 30, 1861, to sew blue flannel shirts and flannel drawers for the state's recruits. Through their efforts, each Westborough soldier was outfitted with a uniform, fatigue suit, havelock, thread-bag, towels, handkerchiefs, soap, and a comb. For the duration of the Civil War the local Soldiers' Sewing Society made hundreds of mittens, socks, towels, handkerchiefs, and bandages that were sent directly to the regiments or through the Sanitary Commission in Boston.

Westborough continued to send men to the war, and Westborough soldiers fought with Company C, 34th Regiment; Company I, 50th Regiment; Company A, 51st Regiment; Company E, 51st Regiment; Company B, 57th Regiment; and with the Brigade Band, Corps d'Afrique. In 1862, when prospects of the Union Army were at a low ebb, to attain the town's quota of thirty-two men proved difficult until a bounty of \$100, and later \$200, was offered for each recruit. Since the town had no legal authority to raise money to pay for these bounties, four prominent citizens — Abijah Wood, A. J. Burnap, J. A. Fayerweather, and Zebina Gleason — loaned \$10,000 for that purpose.

Men from Westborough fought at the battles of Newbern, Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Wilderness, North Anna River, Cold Har-

bor, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Mine Run, Spotsylvania, Totopotomy, and Petersburg.

The war memories of Sargeant Austin Stearns of Company K are recorded in the book, *Three Years with Company K* (A. Kent, ed., 1976). Stearn's account describes the makeshift log cabins the Westborough soldiers built for the winters, the scanty meals of hardtack and beans, the strenuous work of constructing earthworks, and the confusion and bloodshed in battle. He also comments favorably on the "Johnnies," rebel soldiers he encountered as individuals when countrymen from North and South shared rations and stories while not engaged in combat.

Stearns comments in his journal, "The friendships that had been formed and welded through more than twenty battles, long marches, and privations incident to a life of a soldier through three years of service will last as long as life itself, and today after a lapse of twenty years, whenever I see or hear of a 13th man, I feel a thrill of pleasure and long to grasp him by the hand and say 'Comrade.' "

The total number of soldiers Westborough sent to the Civil War was 337; many of the men enlisted more than once. Of the recruits, sixty-two were wounded and twenty-five lost their lives: fourteen from wounds, three from disease, and eight from neglect in Southern prisons. Only five of the dead were returned to the town.

The end of the Civil War in 1865 was greeted with great joy in Westborough. The annual town report of 1866 stated, "It is cause of profound gratitude that the strife which had disturbed our country for the past few years has been brought to a close, and that now the avocations of peace follow in the gory track of battle. Our Volunteers have returned to their former pursuits in the workshops, and in the farms, and now enjoy the peace and quiet of their own happy homes."

The town spent a total of \$23,920 to finance its part in the Civil War; the state later reimbursed the \$18,000 spent for the assistance to soldiers and their families. In 1866 the town voted to erect in Memorial Cemetery in front of Town Hall a granite monument to commemorate those killed in the Civil War. The monument, dedicated in June 1869, was engraved with the names of fallen soldiers and remains as an eloquent memorial today.

Newspapers

The weekly news of Westborough was first printed in the *Westboro Messenger*, published in 1849. This journal was followed by the *Westboro Sheaf* in 1855 and the *Westboro Transcript* in 1860. Each of these papers

events of note. From the 1950s on, the Chronotype had a number of owners, including Herb Stanger and Jake Aronson. Finally, in 1974 the last *Westborough Chronotype* rolled off the press.

Stepping in as the hometown weekly newspaper was the *Westborough News*, which began publishing in 1974. Under editor Barbara Smith the paper has continued up to the present to inform residents of local news stories and social activities.

Banks

The town's first banks began within five years of each other in the 1860s. The First National Bank of Westborough was incorporated on May 11, 1864 with John A. Fayerweather as its first president. The bank moved into the Post Office Block on West Main Street when that block was erected in 1869. One hundred years after its charter was signed, in 1964, the First National Bank merged with the Guaranty Bank and Trust. The Guaranty Bank and Trust removed the top floor from the Post Office Block and renovated the building in 1976 for its own and other commercial use.

The Westborough Savings Bank was incorporated on February 9, 1869. Cyrus Fay served as the bank's first president until his death in 1884. The Savings Bank was first established in the block on the corner of South and West Main Streets but later shared space and personnel with the First National Bank in the Post Office Block. In 1918 the bank was moved to 30 West Main Street (Swan's Hardware), where it remained until the present Westborough Savings Bank was erected at 33 West Main Street in 1928. The bank still operates at this location next to Memorial Cemetery on the former site of the second Center School. The Westborough Savings Bank is the only bank remaining in town that originated and still has its headquarters in Westborough.

There were only two banks in Westborough until August 1965 when the Worcester County National Bank opened in the Iandoli's shopping center on East Main Street. Other banks followed this lead, and in 1984 there are twelve banks located in Westborough.

The Poor Farm

Communities have always had to wrestle with the problem of providing for individuals who for some reason are not able to support themselves. Westborough dealt with its paupers in a variety of ways; the town poor farm proved to be the most successful and long-lasting solution.

At first Westborough tried to make its paupers disappear—an out-of-sight, out-of-mind approach. Westborough historian H. P. DeForest wrote, "About 1763 a memorandum was begun in the town records of persons

warned out of the town limits according to law, when it seemed likely that they might become dependent on the town. In the course of two or three years this list included thirty-eight names, many being heads of families."

This solution proved impractical, so in 1767 a town workhouse was built on land owned by Timothy Warren. Westborough appointed Abijah Gale, George Andrews, and Timothy Warren as the first Overseers of the Poor in 1770 and agreed that the workhouse was to be regulated according to law. No details about this workhouse have been found, except for the fact that it continued in operation until it was sold in 1790.

For the next thirty-five years town paupers were "struck off" at auction to the lowest bidder. The person offering to charge the town least for the support of its paupers was contracted to care for them. Most often this responsibility was granted to Levi Bowman of Upton Road. In 1825, for instance, Bowman had twelve paupers assigned to him when he bid to support them for \$.97 each per week.

This arrangement was both inefficient and humiliating to the paupers. At this time Westborough had approximately twenty permanent paupers, one for every 65 inhabitants. Appropriated for their support was \$1,700 in 1819 and \$1,400 in 1820, which was deemed insufficient. The town appointed a committee made up of Joel Parker, Silas Wesson, Joshua Mellen, Lovett Peters, and Otis Brigham to investigate the pauper problem more fully.

In May 1825 the committee gave its report, recommending that the town establish a Town Farm. The report asked the Westborough citizen to consider "whether the number of those who spend one half of their time in idleness, and the other half in drinking out what they earn in the one half, is not greatly increased; whether he would see so many intemperate, idle, and ragged men, idle and ragged children, growing up, not only to be paupers, but mere pests of society. . . It is believed that if the town had a (poor) farm, and a few examples were made of certain characters, it would be a terror to evil-doers. . . There have been repeated instances in town of paupers (saying), 'The Town pays for my board, and I will not work except I have the benefit of it myself.' This is an error that needs to be corrected."

After the presentation of this report the town voted to buy for \$4,600 the 196-acre farm of Captain Daniel Chamberlain on Flanders Road for use as a poor farm. From 1825 to 1881 this farm housed those unable to care for themselves and was sometimes referred to as the Town Infirmary.

The Overseers of the Poor reported in 1869, "Your Overseers have taken much satisfaction the last year in visiting the farm at stated times, as well



The Poor Farm, Bowman St. from across Sandra Pond (c. 1881).

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

as occasionally, in always finding everything satisfactory, and judiciously managed. We have never seen any difference in the looks or management when they expected us, or when we happened there unbeknown to them. We always found the feeble and sick cared for and nursed with tender and maternal care; the old made comfortable and happy; the young performing their duties not as a task, but as a pleasant pastime. And in all, the management, both indoors and out, has been performed with justice tempered with mercy...."

The Town Farm was designed to be self-supporting; under the careful husbandry of the superintendent and matron, Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Pickering, its output was admirable. To help earn their livelihood, residents at the farm raised vegetables, hay, apples, as well as oxen, cows, and chickens. In 1868 the Town Farm housed seventeen permanent paupers and provided lodging for 175 travelers. Its land and other assets were valued at \$12,936.

After purchasing Frank Sandra's property on the corner of Upton Road and Bowman Streets for the town reservoir in 1879, Westborough voted to build a new town farm on the land. The large farmhouse facing Bowman Street and the surrounding pasture served as the poor farm from 1881 to 1948. After World War II the house was remodeled into five apartments for use as veterans' housing. In 1954 the property was sold to private owners, ending this local experiment in social reform.



THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

1900-1920

Town Profile

Westborough at the turn of the century until the end of World War I was a village with a healthy blend of fertile farmlands, wooded hills, lakes, and a thriving industrial community at its center. The population in 1900 was listed as 5,400 and in 1920 it had increased only to 5,789 — it is believed that these numbers also included the populations at Westborough State Hospital and the Lyman School.

Broad dirt roads led into town, with the major routes bisected by trolley tracks. People strolled along the concrete sidewalks under the towering canopy of shade trees while others got about town in a horse and wagon or on their new bicycles.

The Westborough Board of Trade enthusiastically listed Westborough's advantages in a 1899 publication:

"Westboro, Mass.: It is one of the most beautiful towns in New England, cleanliness and neatness being visible everywhere. It is connected with Worcester and neighboring towns by both steam and electric railways. . . Westboro is finely situated for manufacturing or residential purposes, as there is excellent passenger and freight service to Boston, New York and the west.

"Train service: There are eleven passenger trains daily from Boston and

nine to Boston, and three Sunday trains each way. Season tickets between Boston and Westboro are thirty cents for the round trip.

"Westboro is rated as being one of the most healthy towns in the State. It is now and always has been a no license town, and is orderly and progressive."

✻ The Town of Westborough: ✻

ITS ADVANTAGES FOR BUSINESS AND FOR RESIDENCE.



LOCATION.—Westborough is in the eastern part of Worcester county, Massachusetts, on the main line of the Boston & Albany railroad, thirty-two miles west of Boston and twelve miles east of Worcester.

RAILROAD FACILITIES.—There are seven trains for Boston every week day, and eight for Worcester. To Boston the fare is seventy-two cents. Three months' tickets, good for 162 rides, cost \$27.00—less than seventeen cents per trip. To Worcester the fare is thirty cents. Three months' tickets cost \$17.00—less than eleven cents per trip. The ride to Boston takes one hour; to Worcester, twenty-five minutes.

POPULATION.—The population is about six thousand. The industries employ an excellent class of help. The standard of intelligence and prosperity is very high. Palaces and hovels are both lacking; the dwellings betoken general thrift and comfortable homes.

INDUSTRIES.—The town abounds in fertile and well cultivated farms. The manufacturing establishments include two factories for making straw hats, employing over a thousand hands; two boot and shoe factories, employing over five hundred hands; four sleigh factories, employing over fifty hands; a bicycle factory, employing ninety hands; and a piano factory employing twenty hands. In 1885 the value of manufactured products was \$2,004,887; agricultural products, \$218,508.

CHURCHES.—There are five churches: Catholic, Congregational, Baptist, Unitarian and Methodist. They are all well attended and well supported.

SCHOOLS.—The town maintains twenty schools with twenty-three teachers and a thousand pupils. The buildings, mainly well-built brick structures, are provided with all sanitary conveniences. The schools are liberally supported and in a very creditable condition.

SOCIETIES.—Prominent among the societies are the Board of Trade, the Grange, the Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Y. M. C. A., the Grand Army, the Village Improvement Society, the Park Association, the Historical Society, etc., etc. There are numerous benevolent, literary and social organizations.

HIGHWAYS.—The streets are broad, clean and well cared for. There are many delightful drives over good country roads with pleasant scenery. Excellent concrete walks, some twelve miles in length, extend through all parts of the village. The town abounds in beautiful shade trees. The streets—as well as many stores, factories and residences—are lighted by electricity.

WATERWORKS.—Sandra Pond, on a hill two miles from Central Square, furnishes a pure, adequate and inexpensive supply of water for domestic and manufacturing purposes, and in connection with a well organized fire department affords ample protection from fires. The head is 133 feet; the pressure, about 55 pounds.

MISCELLANEOUS.—The town supports a good public library, with over eight thousand volumes. There are two newspapers.—The *Westborough Chronotype* and *The Westborough Tribune*; two hotels, the Whitney House and the Adams House; a national bank and a savings bank; and two State institutions, the Westborough Insane Asylum and the Lyman School. The town is strongly "no-license" and very orderly. The health rate is very high. The valuation in 1889 was \$2,632,638; the tax-rate was \$15.40 on \$1,000.

CONCLUSION.—As it is impossible in such a circular to give more than very meagre information, it is suggested to all who are looking for a location for business, to all who desire a home in a pleasant town, to all who appreciate a healthful summer residence, that they inspect for themselves the numerous advantages offered by the town of Westborough.

THE WESTBOROUGH TRIBUNE PRINT

1889 — 1891

ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE

The town attracted not only businessmen but summer tourists as well who were drawn by the beautiful countryside, lakes, and fresh air.

Those who grew up in Westborough in the early 1900s remember a simpler time and a slower, friendly pace in daily life. The village center had several small markets, some specializing in meats or vegetables, or pastries. Forbes and Newcombe occupied its own wooden building at 14 West Main Street (Spectacle Shop). Crandall's Market was located next to Memorial Cemetery (Westborough Savings) and farther down at 18 East Main Street was MacDonald's Market. J. Gannon ran a dairy supply and butter store on Milk Street for the convenience of the town's farmers.

Rachel Dearing remembers, "Forbes and Newcombe on West Main Street had double doors on the front and sawdust on the floor. The meat counter ran parallel with the street. Sides of beef were hanging there and a whole half carcass. The butcher would cut off steaks or roasts for you on the chopping block and would grind the hamburger while you waited. The store had cracker barrels filled with butter crackers and barrels of pickles and pickled pig's feet in brine."

"At MacDonald's we'd call in our order every morning, and they'd deliver it around noontime. They often would call their good customers every day and deliver the order in a horse and wagon."

"Wagner's Bakery at 18 West Main made bread daily; you could smell it when you passed by. I especially remember the eclairs and cream puffs.



Street railway waiting room at Winchenbach's.

Courtesy of Annie Fales collection.



S. G. Henry Block — prior to 1873.
Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.



C. S. Henry Block — after 1873.
Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

In the beginning Gus Wagner would come around with a canvas-covered wagon to deliver bread. We kept our beanpot in the bakery with our name on it. On Saturday around 5 p.m. we would pick up our pot of baked beans and some of Wagner's steamed brown bread."

For the candy-lovers there was Winchenbach's candy store in the Cobb Block on the northwest corner of Milk and Main Streets. Here residents could buy homemade confectioneries and also wait for the trolleys that left the town square for all the neighboring towns. Rachel Dearing has a vivid memory of the candy store:

"Winchenbach's had a room out back that had a pole with a hook on it that was used to make molasses candy. When the candy was soft enough they would toss it over the hook and pull. The molasses changed color from dark to light and when it was ready it was crisp and hard." Winchenbach's in later years became a soda fountain, Thompson's Spa.

Penny candy could be found at Chamberlain's News Room in the Post Office block on West Main Street. Low glass cases down the length of the store were filled with peppermints, licorice, and jaw breakers to delight every child. Chamberlain's was a popular gathering spot for adults as well, for it was here that they stopped to pick up a newspaper, magazine, stationery, tobacco or cigars, fruit in season, and the local gossip.

The drug stores also had their special ambience. S. G. Henry had established the Westborough Drug Store in 1855 and had built the Henry



Cobb Block, corner of Main and Milk.

Courtesy of Annie Fales Collection.

Block on South Street to house his concern. His son Charles continued the business and took an active part in the Village Improvement Society for town beautification. The drug store is still located on the same site, having been run by the Blois family since 1917. Along West Main Street was Buxton's Rexall Drug Store where large square apothecary jars were filled with mysterious powders and fragrant soaps, and even cough drops.

The Cobb Block, built in 1836 by J. B. Kimball as a shoe factory, housed at the turn of the century Buxton's Rexall Drug Store and Wichenbach's candy shop. The Chronotype printing office was located on the second floor. The Cobb Block was razed in 1935.

Once the inner man was satisfied, thoughts would turn to adorning the exterior. In the Arcade Building, erected in 1890 between Summer and Milk Streets, could be found Everett A. Lord's haberdashery, T. H. Reilly's shoe shop, and Denham's dry goods (Berkley/Regalia). Sanford's (Blankenship/Golden's) was another small dry goods shop on West Main Street. Since most dresses were made at home, these shops offered an abundant array of materials, sewing notions, and even a few ready-made school dresses and housedresses.

Offering not only dry goods but a multitude of other items was J. S. Gates on West Main and South Streets (Westboro Package Store). Lucy Gates Nason remembers her father's store well: "My father's store had three floors and sold everything but groceries and meats — all kinds of dry goods,



Inside Woodman's Store.

Courtesy of Ella Wilson.

clothes, lamps, furniture, even rugs. On the third floor there was a rope with a hook to take the furniture up and down since there were no elevators then. As a child for fun I would take hold of the rope and dangle. I spent a great deal of time at my father's store, even going out on deliveries."

For even more elaborate adornment, residents could visit Welch's Jewelry shop on the corner of South and West Main Streets (Balloons Over Westborough). Milliners had several shops in town filled with elegant trimmings like lace, ribbons, plumes, and flowers for ladies' hats.



C. B. Frost Hardware, 30 W. Main St.

Courtesy of Annie Fales collection.

BOARDING.
THE cheapest and best place in town to board is the
WESTBORO' HOTEL.
 Gentlemen (board and room) \$5.00 per week.
 Ladies, " " 3.50 " "
TABLE BOARD.—Gentlemen, \$4 per week;—
 Ladies, \$3.
 No lunches on Sundays; but regular meals the same as week days.
 R. K. SHERMAN, Proprietor.

Price TEN Cents.
NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING.



Westboro Hotel and 1878 ad from Westborough Chronotype.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

While the women were trying on hats, their husbands might be found at Woodman's Hardware Store on West Main Street. Established in 1887, the store, according to the Board of Trade, had "an exceptionally large stock, including all kinds of heavy and shelf hardware, farming tools, fine table and pocket cutlery, stoves, ranges, furnaces, plain and japanned tinware, agate ware, wooden ware, etc." Another hardware store, C. B. Frost's, was located next to the Town Hall on West Main (Swan's Hardware).

There were several hotels to house the tourists and businessmen who traveled to Westborough. Nearest the old railroad depot on Brigham Street was the Westboro Hotel at the head of Brigham and South Streets (Sunoco Station). It is described as "a neat structure, containing forty guests' rooms, well furnished and lighted and kept perfectly clean . . . There is a pool room connected where lovers of this scientific game can spend their leisure moments. The Westboro Hotel is located in the very heart of the business portion of the town, at the terminus of the Worcester and Marlborough Electric Railway."



Whitney House Hotel (1881-1907).
Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

The National House, also known as the Westboro Inn, was built adjacent to the National Straw Works on East Main Street originally as a boarding house for the female straw workers. Later it became a general hotel until it burned in 1917.

One of the most imposing structures in town was the four-story brick Whitney House built by Christopher Whitney in 1881. Located on the corner of Parkman and West Main Streets, where the Forbes Building is now, it housed shops on its first floor and fifty hotel rooms above. The Board of Trade's description in 1889 says, "The Whitney House is lighted by electricity, has electric call bells, sanitary plumbing, hot and cold water baths, etc. The office, parlors, dining-room, reading and writing-room, and billiard-parlor are on the same floor. There is also a first class livery attached, and free carriages are run to and from all trains." On the street level of the Whitney House were located Lowe's Drug Store, the Farnsworth Market, and a fish market. A bicycle shop and Chinese laundry stood nearby.

Livery Stables

The livery stables played an important role in turn-of-the-century



E. F. Brown's Livery Stable, Parkman St.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

Westborough since it was here that the shops would keep their delivery teams, business men their carriages, and salesmen could hire a hack for sales calls. Behind the Whitney House was the livery stable of Everett Brown. It was promoted as having "at all times, first class turnouts, good riding and driving animals, with well-kept vehicles for all occasions. Mr. Brown has accommodations for over thirty horses, and pays particular attention to boarders, the best of food and care being given them by competent grooms. Turnouts for weddings, parties, balls and funerals are furnished at short notice and at reasonable terms."

On Brigham Street behind the Westborough Hotel was John Ford's livery stable. As well as boarding horses and renting carriages, Ford also did light and heavy teaming. He would meet every train with his horse and wagon, ready to deliver any freight around the town.

Entertainment

The entertainment for the town centered around the dances, concerts, theatricals, and movies held in the Town Hall. Sid Aptt notes, "Dances were a common method of entertainment. The old Town Hall was host for many years to the St. Patrick's Night Fireman's Ball, the Masonic Ball, the Board of Trade Dance, and the Halloween Masquerade Party run by the local Grange. During the winter months, somebody had a dance going every Saturday night."



Westborough parade c. 1900.

Courtesy of Kristina Allen.

"Other forms of entertainment included frequent band concerts in the Square. The Westboro Brass Band was one of the prides of the town. Practice night was the first Tuesday of the month on Summer Street and usually attracted a large crowd. Other musical groups were Bennett's orchestra and the fine Lyman School Band made up of boys of all ages from the school."

"A most important part of the social life was the movie theater," adds Aptt. "The Town Hall was the first to show the films, offered to the town by Louis Cartier. The shows were generally run only on Saturday—a matinee in the afternoon and a full show at night. The price of admission for the matinee was five cents for under sixteen and ten cents for adults. The evening show was fifteen cents for everybody. The films were silent pictures and were accompanied by a piano played by Vesta Aptt Tyler. She would watch the picture and play appropriate music as the theme required." The residents of Westborough did not need to look beyond the town borders for lively entertainment.

Turn-of-the-Century Industries

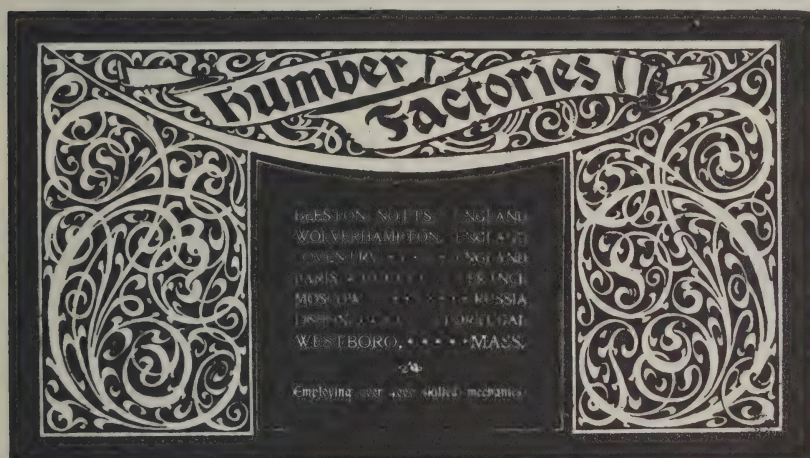
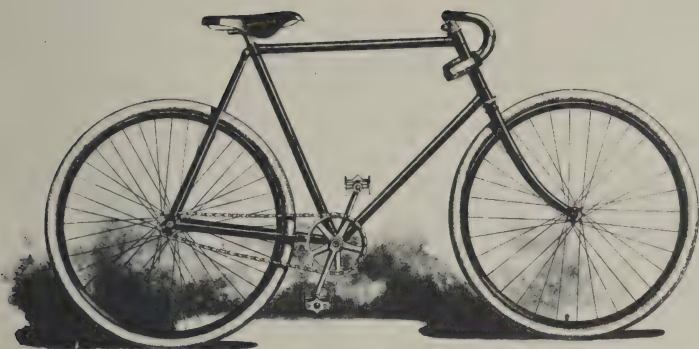
As Westborough became established as a center of hat and shoe manufacture, other factories were also drawn to the town by the proximity of the railroad. At the turn of the century a variety of industries—from bicycles to cloth tape, metal bedsteads to ladies' lingerie—located in downtown Westborough. Although many dairies graced the town's country roads, the heart of Westborough was quickened with industrial activity.

Beach Street

Bicycle Factories

The sport of bicycling became a national craze with the introduction of the safety bike in 1885. This bicycle had two wheels of equal size, making it easier and safer to ride than the high-wheelers popular in the 1870s. Westborough joined the bicycle mania in 1889 when Frederick White opened the White Cycle Company on 12 Beach Street. White was the inventor of the "Broncho," a chainless safety bicycle that had won recognition in England and the United States. His large, well-equipped shop on Beach Street employed ninety men in bicycle production.

In February 1895 Humber and Company, America Limited, bought the White bicycle factory. Westborough's became the only factory in America producing the prestigious Humber bicycles; other factories were located in Coventry, Paris, Moscow, and Lisbon. The Humber Company



1896 Humber Racer, price — \$125, and catalog cover.

Courtesy of Kenneth Claflin.

numbered the Prince and Princess of Wales among its customers as well as J. Pierpont Morgan, William Steinway, and Max Agassiz in the United States. Its motto, "not cheap, but good," was borne out in its 1896 Westborough catalog that featured a Lady Humber for \$120 and a Humber Racer for \$125. The American market for bicycles continued to grow until automobiles supplanted the bicycle as the new form of transportation in the early 1900s.

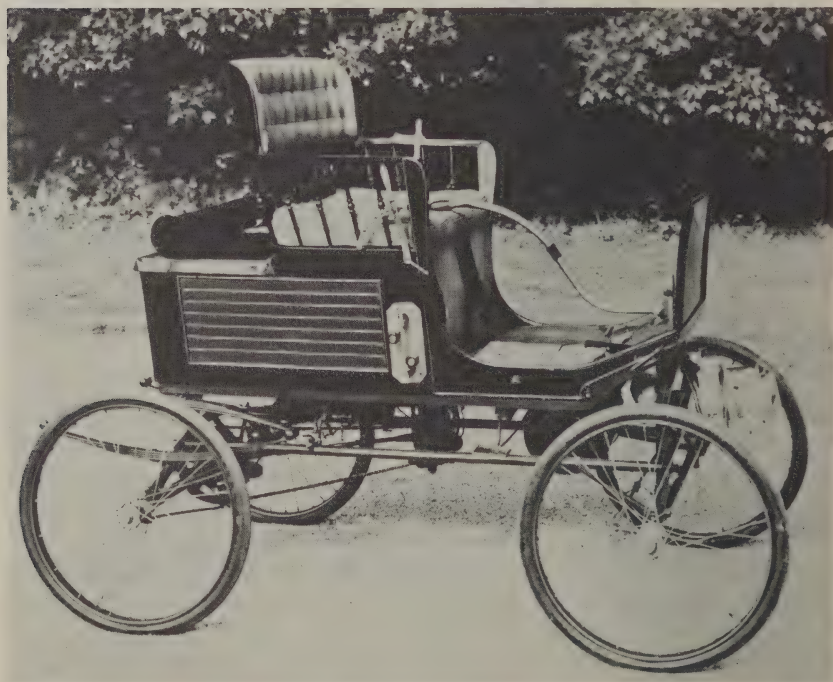
Stanley Locomotives

Humber and Company in 1899 sold its facility on 12 Beach Street to the Stanley Locomobile Company. From 1899 to 1902 the Locomobile



Westboro Tanning Corp., formerly on Beach St.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.



The Locomobile.

Courtesy of Kenneth Claflin.



Steamer was produced in Westborough. About 150 men were employed in this Stanley automobile factory.

The December 2, 1889 *Westborough Chronotype* described the car to its readers: "The Stanley two-seated locomobile that has appeared on our streets lately is the first one that has been seen here. It is fitted up with the same engine as the more familiar one-seated wagon, but the power is ample for any of the hills hereabouts, filled with four heavy men, as it was on one of its trial trips. The engine perhaps puffed a little more than usual, but that was the only difference perceived from running on the level. There is possibly more evenness than in the smaller wagons, as the two-seater is heavier and built to carry greater weight, but the speed the wagon is capable of is the same, and there is the same perfect control in turning corners or descending hills. Some fifty of these two-seaters are now being built to fill all orders."

William Little, who had been born in town in 1878, worked in the Locomobile factory on Beach Street. In 1901 the local factory was purchased by Locomobile Company of America, and in 1901 Little moved with the company to Bridgeport, Connecticut. Locomobiles became gasoline cars in 1904, and Billy Little became superintendent of the Bridgeport plant. He eventually became general manager of the Buick Company in Flint, Michigan, producing a car of his own—the "Little Four," a prototype of the Chevrolet.

The Westboro Tannery •

James Cooper set up his tannery in the vacated bicycle/Locomobile fac-

tory in 1914. This tannery at 12 Beach Street continued to operate under Cooper's sons until 1969. Sheepskins from New Zealand and Scotland and kangaroo skins from Australia were pickled in salt and shipped by train in large casks to the Westborough tannery. The raw pelts were treated in the tannery in vats of chemicals, then tacked on boards to dry. Later the leather was tanned — glazed to make patent leather, buffed for suede, or embossed with a design.

In 1971 after the tannery had been closed for two years, the State, as a preventative measure, ordered the factory destroyed to eliminate any possibility of contamination from anthrax spores. In September 1971 the Westborough Fire Department burned the old Beach Street factory; the grease and oil-soaked boards plus the tarred roof fueled a fire whose black plume of smoke could be seen almost to Boston.

Phillips Street

Hunt Manufacturing Company

J. A. Hunt started a factory at 6 Phillips Street in 1891 to produce a high grade bicycle saddle, no doubt attracted to Westborough by the bicycle industry already located there. In an 1898 atlas the firm was described as follows: "This Company's goods are known throughout nearly all the civilized world. Starting late in 1891 with a limited capital, it has grown year by year until now it is capable of producing two thousand saddles daily. . . It is this continuous progress toward perfection and the attainment of the best yet produced that leads the bicycle buyer, no matter what make the wheel may be, to insist that it be equipped with a Hunt Saddle. The very fact that the Westborough plant produces so large a variety of first-class goods tells the story of their worth and merit. The saddles are designed to meet the special requirements of riders of either sex, and all ages. The line comprises hard, firm saddles for the racer and scorcher, and larger spring saddles for the tourist, and the pneumatic, cushion, hygienic laced, felt or hair-padded saddles, and in fact everything that is first-class in the saddle line."

The three-story factory was sold to the Westboro Hat Company in 1904, and the Hunt Manufacturing Company moved to Brigham Street where it was listed in a 1913 map as the "Hunt Metal Corner Company." By 1917 there was no reference to be found about the company.

Westboro Hat Company

The Westboro Hat Company, founded by George Genthner in 1901, occupied the large factory at 6 Phillips Street from 1904 to about the 1940s. The hat shop had a number of owners during these years and at its peak



WESTBORO HAT COMPANY

LADIES' MISSES' AND CHILDREN'S

STRAW AND FELT HATS

WESTBORO, MASS.

production employed about 300 workers. (See Straw Hat Industry, Chapter 3.)

Brigham Street

The various shoe manufacturers who had operated from the old J. B. Kimball factory on Brigham Street since 1860 had relocated by 1900. The industry on Brigham Street, located beside the railroad track, was diversified.

Lumber and Coal Yards

Christopher Whitney, and later his son-in-law Frank Bartlett, operated a large lumber yard and mill on the east side of Brigham Street. In the 1880s Eddy, Smith, and Sawyer owned the coal sheds a little farther down on Brigham Street; these were eventually operated by J. S. Nason.

Gilmore Brothers

The Gilmore brothers—Edward, Henry, and Hervey—patented an adjustable spring bed bottom and manufactured spring beds in their factory on the corner of Brigham and Cottage Streets in the 1870s. This innovative spring bed was described as “very durable, easy, and perfectly noiseless.” The Gilmore Brothers factory continued to operate until it was replaced by the American Bedstead Company on Union Street in the 1890s.

Armour and Company

From the late 1890s to World War I, Armour and Company operated a refrigerated warehouse where Brigham Street meets Cottage Street. Armour shipped the meat all dressed and cut into Westborough by rail. From the Westborough warehouse the meat was distributed all over the area.

GILMORE BROS. & CO.,

WESTBORO', Worcester County, MASS.

Shop near the Boston & Albany R. R. Depot.

MANUFACTURERS OF

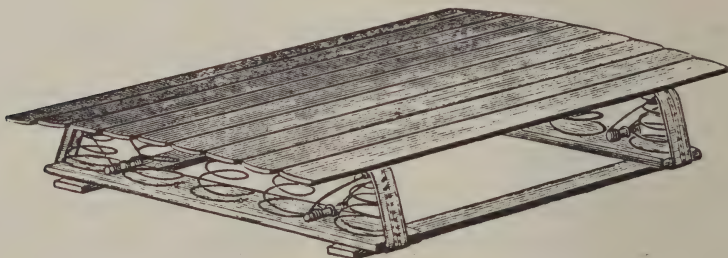
GILMORE'S PATENT ADJUSTABLE Spring Bed-Bottom.



We offer to the public a Spring Bed which is rapidly winning its way to popular favors on *its own merits*.

It is liked because it is *very durable, easy, perfectly noiseless*, and - can be sold at a *reasonable price*.

Territorial rights for sale, and good commissions offered to agents.



Our department for the Repairing and Upholstering of Furniture, also Picture Framing and General Jobbing is in charge of Mr. L. E. Long, whose recognized ability and experience in this line is a guarantee that all work will be faithfully done.



1898 map of Westborough's business district.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

An 1899 advertisement announced that Armour and Company were “wholesalers in beef, mutton, lamb, veal, pork, poultry, and other fine provisions.”

Cattle Stockyards

With the large number of dairies and farms in Westborough, the cattle business was an important facet in the town’s economy. Robert Harvey, cattleman and owner of Harvey’s Landfill, remembers, “My grandfather Arthur Harvey was a cattle dealer in Westborough. He went from farm to farm buying cattle from local farmers. As a kid I remember him driving the cattle on Monday nights up South Street to the stockyards near the railroad on Brigham Street. The cows would be loaded on railroad cars, and the railroad would pick them up that night. By Tuesday morning the cattle would be in Brighton, then sold in Boston.”

“In 1911 my father Emory Harvey inherited and expanded the business. He went to the midwest, bought cattle, shipped them back to Westborough, and sold them to individual farmers. Every two weeks he’d ship in two carloads of cattle—twenty-four to a car. I remember unloading the cattle down at the stockyards in the 1930s and driving them up South Street. In those days we could only get eight cows on a truck at a time, so it was easier to drive them up the street all at once.”

The Aronson brothers came to town in the early 1920s and also bought and sold cattle on a large scale. The Aronson farm was the former Fayerweather/Whitney/Bartlett estate at 88 West Main Street (present High School property). The Aronsons also shipped in cattle from the midwest, unloaded them at the stockyards, and drove them up Main Street to their farm. Selectman Ray Welsh notes, “As kids we loved going down to the stockyards and watching the cattle be driven up Main Street. Sometimes the kids would throw firecrackers to make the herd stampede.”

The cattle business gained particular importance during World War II since the government bought all the dressed beef to send to the troops overseas. Local markets, however, could buy live beef to slaughter and dress themselves. The Harveys and the Aronsons operated a tremendous business from 1942 until 1947, shipping in as many as fifty cattle a day.

“My father during World War II went to Chicago and Wichita to buy cattle,” adds Bob Harvey, “then he’d ship them back to Westborough, load them on small trucks, and deliver them to markets all around the area. After the War the railroad business petered out, and more cattle could be shipped faster by truck from the midwest.” The Harveys have continued to sell cattle on a small scale ever since, and in 1984 Bob Harvey keeps his herd of Herefords pastured near the Landfill on Hopkinton Road. The

Aronsons' business ended abruptly when their farm was destroyed by the 1953 Tornado and three of the Aronsons were killed.

Marcus Mason and Company

Marcus Mason and Company was established at 25 Brigham Street during the 1920s by James Guiler in the former factory of the Warren Fraser Grinding Company. The firm manufactured specialized plantation equipment used to process sugar, rice, and coffee on plantations in Central and South America as well as in the Caribbean. As one of two major producers of plantation equipment in the United States, the company manufactured large hullers, driers, blowers, and pulpers. At one time Marcus Mason and Company had a branch in Cuba, but this factory was confiscated by Fidel Castro. During World War II Marcus Mason employed up to fifty workers on government contract work. Included in this work was the production of jet engines for Pratt and Whitney. Marcus Mason was run for many years by Cameron Guiler, son of the founder, and finally stopped production in 1962.



Union Street

Bartlett Box

Wooden packing boxes were a necessity to Westborough factories shipping their goods out on the railroad. Christopher Whitney recognized this need in the 1870s and erected a box and lumber factory at the end of Union Street on the railroad spur. This enterprise proved so successful that Whitney purchased the Fayerweather home at 88 West Main Street (High School grounds). He transformed the house into a fifteen-room showplace with a mansard roof, spring house, and landscaped grounds. It was later owned by Whitney's son-in-law Frank Bartlett and the Aronson family until it was destroyed in the 1953 tornado. Christopher Whitney also built the Whitney House hotel in 1881 on the east corner of West Main and Parkman Streets, present site of the Forbes Building.

After Whitney's death in 1889, Frank Bartlett continued the box and lumber business. The company not only manufactured packing boxes, but



Bartlett Box, Union St.
Courtesy of Ray Welsh.



Inside view of Bartlett Box.
Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.



Whitney/Bartlett Home, (site of Westborough High School)
Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

sold clapboard, shingles, laths, and beaver board as well as pine, spruce, and hemlock from its large lumber yard. In the 1920s Bay State Abrasives built up around the Bartlett Box Factory and had absorbed it by the 1930s.

Foster-Richardson Bedstead Company

In the 1890s the American Bedstead factory was built on Union Street. This metal bedstead factory was soon taken over by the Foster-Richardson Company. The firm poured steel into molds to form the bedsteads. Bay State leased the factory building in 1927 and eventually bought the facility. The old factory was torn down to accommodate the present Bay State Research and Development building.



Foster — Richardson, from Union looking toward Brigham.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

Milk Street

Gould and Walker Factory

The four-story wooden Gould and Walker shoe factory was built in 1887 at 50 Milk Street. The original company had vacated the building by 1901 when the Westboro Underwear Company located in the first and second floors. Louis Fairbanks and J. E. Walker were the first owners of the underwear factory; Louis Fairbanks continued to manage the business until the factory was destroyed in the disastrous fire in March 1947. The Westboro Underwear Company produced cotton nightgowns, robes, pajamas, and "bloomers." Many Westborough women were employed by



Westboro Weaving, corner of Milk and Spring.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

the factory as sewing machine operators or packers. The garments were cut, sewed, and packed to be sent by rail all over the country.

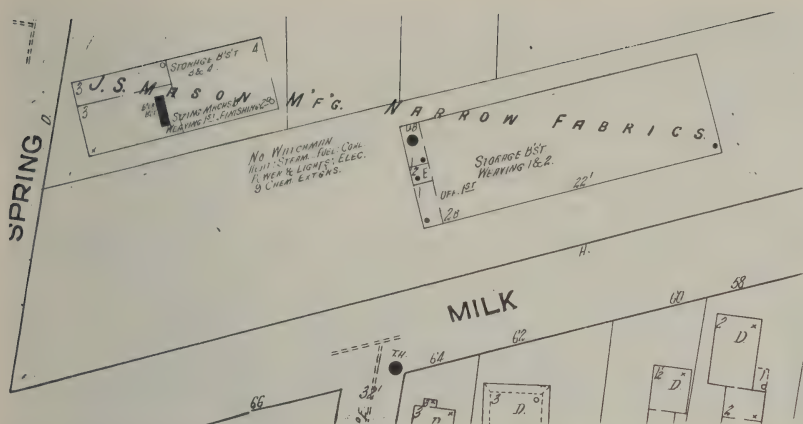
The top two floors continued to be used for the manufacture of shoes. After Gould and Walker, H. E. Brigham produced shoes on the premises. Rasmussen Shoe Company located there in the 1930s and remained there until it, too, was burned out in 1947.

Westboro Weaving

Over the doorway of the brick factory on the northwest corner of Milk and Spring Streets is carved "Westboro Weaving—1902". This building stands as the sole memorial to the bustle of industrial activity that was Milk Street. Edward C. Richard established Westboro Weaving early in the 20th century and manufactured narrow fabric, or cloth tape, on the site until 1929. That year Westboro Weaving moved its textile operation to South Carolina where labor was less expensive and the cotton supply closer.

Kenworthy Brothers

The Kenworthy Brothers moved their company into the vacated Westboro Weaving factory about 1932. The firm employed approximately twenty-five workers to laminate fabrics and make parts for the shoe industry. Kenworthy products, for example, included canvas for sneakers and inner soles. In World War II the company waterproofed Army rain-gear. Kenworthy Brothers continued in operation until 1965. Polyform,



Home of J. S. Mason, 19 Church St., c. 1853.

Photo by Paula Skog.

makers of styrofoam and molded plastic products, now occupies the old factory.

J. S. Mason and Sons

On the opposite corner of Spring and Milk Streets, across from Westboro Weaving, was located the J. S. Mason Company. Listed in the 1905 Westborough directory, J. S. Mason was also a manufacturer of narrow fabrics. This textile factory claimed two buildings and was equipped with large looms for weaving tape. In those days cloth tape was used in-

stead of elastic in waistbands and for shoelaces, drawstrings, and bias tape. J. S. Mason manufactured cloth tape at the factory into the 1940s. In 1959 Chase Paper bought the factory and operated its printing business there until 1969 when the factory was razed. A cellar hole fringed with trumpet vine is the only reminder today of the giant looms and spools that once rumbled there.



J. S. Nason and Company, Milk St.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.

J. S. Nason and Company

Captain Noah Nason, a sea captain from Maine, settled in Westborough in the late 1860s and began to sell flour, grain, and coal on Milk Street. His son John S. Nason soon joined him in the enterprise. On the pie-shaped property between Milk and Summer Streets, J. S. Nason operated a grist mill for corn and grain for the local farmers.

By 1915 John Nason's son Noah came into the business. At this time the Nasons had long wooden sheds with separate stalls for hay, grain, wood, and coal stretching along Milk Street. Here folks could buy fuel for homes and animals alike. The coal was delivered by freight train to the coal yards that the Nasons had acquired on Brigham Street. The entire company eventually moved to Brigham Street where it concentrated on selling coal and oil. The Nason fuel business was sold to Village Lumber in 1960.

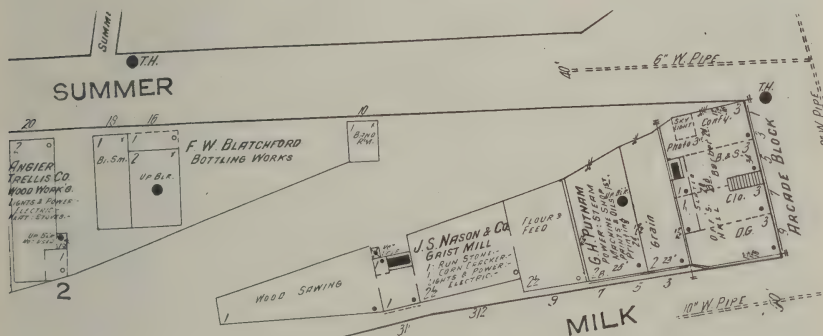


Home of J. S. Nason, 4 John St., built 1903.

Photo by Paula Skog.

Summer Street

One of the earliest factories built on Summer Street was the large Daniel Forbes sleigh factory, erected in 1858. This factory continued to produce sleighs until the turn of the century. Other factories located on Summer Street, near the railroad tracks, included the short-lived Leicester Piano Company, the trellis shop, and the bottling works.



Trellis Factory

Gardens and verandas were not considered complete without a trellis in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The production of trellises was begun in Westborough on a small scale in 1860 by Benjamin B. Nourse. Nourse,

who came to Westborough as an orphan in 1825, was apprenticed to the carpenter Jonas Longley in 1840. He began building trellises with George White in 1860 and moved to a large shop at 20 Summer Street ten years later. Nourse's creations, particularly a folding plant stand and Wardian flower cases, received special recognition at the Cincinnati Industrial Exposition in 1870. Philander Angier took over the trellis factory in 1901, and in 1916 the business was sold to Dwight Marsh. The Marsh Trellis Company continued to be listed in the Westborough business directory through the 1940s.

Bottling Works

Near the trellis shop was the Westborough Bottling Works operated by F. W. Blatchford at 7 Summer Street. This company, listed in directories in 1913 and into the 1920s, bottled various soft drinks such as root beer, birch beer, sarsaparilla, and sparkling beer. The bottling works had disbanded by 1930, but the tradition is carried on today by the Cumberland Farms bottling plant on Flanders Road.

Oak Street

George Macker and Sons

Westborough not only had its curriers and tanners, but producers of

NOURSE, WHITE & CO.,

MANUFACTURERS OF

Pot-Plant, Garden and Veranda TRELLISES,

—AND—

Nourse's Patent Folding Plant Stand.

—ALSO—

Bulb-Tables, Ferneries, Wardian Cases and various
Floral and Horticultural Adornments.

House Brackets and Mouldings, Scroll Sawing and Turning.

SUMMER STREET,

Westboro' Mass.



Home of B. B. Nourse, 15 Parkman St., c. 1851.

Photo by Paula Skog.

trunks and bags as well. After the Civil War George A. Macker returned to his home on Oak Street and began to produce leather goods. His business expanded to bicycle seats, bicycle tool kits, and suitcases. By the early 1900s Macker had constructed a three-story factory at 3 Oak Street as indicated on a 1913 map. George Macker and Sons specialized in straw suitcases with wooden frames and riveted, leather corners. These sturdy cases were designed to withstand great weight so they could double as seats if necessary. The Macker factory continued to employ Westborough residents until the early 1920s.



Home of George Macker, Oak St.

Photo by Paula Skog.

East Main Street

Westborough Trunk and Bag

Westborough Trunk and Bag occupied a portion of the factory vacated by the National Straw Works at the turn of the century. This trunk and bag factory burned in a 1917 fire and relocated for a short time at 50 Milk Street to share the large factory with Westboro Underwear Company.

Hassall and Company

The lace curtain factory operated by James Hassall was also located in the former National Straw Works on East Main Street in the early 1900s. This company produced lace curtains until the 1917 fire destroyed its factory. (See Fire Department, Chapter 9.)

The Trolley in Westborough

No sooner had Westborough Square been cleared of the railroad running across it than trolley tracks took over. In 1901 trolleys were introduced from Westborough to Worcester via North Grafton, running over West Main Street and Nourse Street. Soon there were four local trolley lines connecting the town with surrounding communities. Lines ran from Westborough Square to Northborough along Milk Street, to Marlborough along Lyman Street past Lake Chauncy, and to Hopkinton and Milford along South Street and Hopkinton Road.



Laying trolley tracks in Westborough Center, c. 1901.

Courtesy of Glenn Parker.



Trolley car barn, E. Main St. (now Tufts Machine).

Courtesy of Tufts Machine.

A power plant with a 600-horsepower engine and a backup 400-power engine was built in 1901 on Union Street since the power transmitted from Worcester often proved insufficient for the Westborough-Northborough line. This powerhouse was used until about 1911 when the Worcester Consolidated Street Railway took over the smaller trolley lines and built larger power plants elsewhere. The Union Street powerhouse remained vacant until Bay State Abrasives bought it in 1922 to house its fledgling company.

The local trolleys were garaged in Westborough in the car barn on East Main Street, now used by Tufts Machinery. These comfortable and reliable trolleys brought Westborough residents within an easy ride of the region's scattered cities. The fare within one zone — usually defined by a town's boundaries — was five cents, and the trip to Worcester cost fifteen cents. Tickets could be bought at Winchenbach's candy store, the trolley waiting room on the northwest corner of Milk and Main Streets. Here trolley passengers could wait for a car amid the wonderful aroma of taffy and ribbon candy. Trolley cars would travel down the center of West Main Street from North Grafton, then at Westborough Square swing toward Northborough, Marlborough, or Hopkinton. Passengers could transfer to a trolley to Worcester in Northborough and Marlborough. Many preferred the more direct route from Westborough to Worcester through Grafton, the route followed by the WRTC buses later.

Westborough children who lived on the trolley line were allowed to ride the trolley to school. These pupils would be issued a ticket each day

by their teacher. The trolley men befriended the schoolchildren and were often persuaded to let the youngsters ring the trolley's bell.

H. Winthrop Bullen remembers riding the town trolleys. "The trolleys left every hour from Westborough Square to go to Worcester," he says.



Westborough Square.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.



Trolley tracks on South Street.

Courtesy of Westborough Library.

"There was always a motorman who drove the car and a conductor to collect the fares. There were two kinds of trolleys, a winter one and a summer one. The winter trolley was like a railroad car with upholstered seats for two passengers along a center aisle. They held about fifty passengers. The summer trolleys were open on the sides with a rail the whole length along the outside. The seats on the open trolley were benches all the way across the car. The conductor on the summer trolley walked along the outside running board and collected the fares while holding onto the poles. The kids always loved hanging on the poles, too."



Trolley on the Hopkinton Road.

Courtesy of Ruth Bullard.



Open summer trolley in Westborough Center.

Courtesy of Barbara Smith.

The street railway company purchased Lake Chauncy Park in the early 1900s and developed it as they did other amusement parks to attract city customers to outings in the country. Weekends became the popular time for families to take excursions on the trolley, and Lake Chauncy with its picnic grove, canoes, and dance hall became a popular stop. Passengers from Boston would get off at Lyman Street and transfer to a local trolley to the Park. The Chinese from Boston's Chinatown, for instance, came to Lake Chauncy for their annual outing, and that day the Park resounded with firecrackers from dawn to dusk.

The trolleys reached their height before World War I. After the War, in the 1920s, the automobile came into its own as the popular means of transportation. The severe ice storm of 1922 damaged many local trolley lines, and the company was slow to repair them. A January 1922 *Chronotype* reported on the storm's damage, "It will require much work by linemen before the line is fully re-equipped, for in many places the trolley wires are attached only temporarily and numerous tree branches swing against the windows as the cars go by broken trees."

In 1924 the local trolley lines to Westborough were discontinued. The September 6, 1924 *Chronotype* reported the closing of the Westborough-North Grafton trolley line, "This is the third branch trolley line connected with Westboro that has been forced out of business by lack of patronage, high cost of labor, and the growth of motor vehicle transportation."



1922 ice storm, Rt. 9 at Bellows Road.

Courtesy of Ruth Hunter.

Win Bullen recalls the last run of this trolley vividly. "About midnight on the last run of the trolley about one-quarter of a mile up Nourse Street, five of us high school boys greased the track just before an incline. Then, laughing, we lay in a nearby hayfield to watch. That old car come down those tracks, and when its headlights picked up the greased tracks it sped up, but it slid back. The trolley tried to make it and slid back about five times before the conductor and the motorman got out and sprinkled sand from the side of the road on the tracks."

Although the local trolleys stopped running in 1924, the high-speed Boston-Worcester trolleys continued to run along the Turnpike until Route 9 was modernized in 1931.

Boston and Worcester Trolley Air Line

As trolleys became popular, the idea of an express trolley from Boston to Worcester along the old Boston-Worcester Turnpike took hold. The Turnpike in Westborough (then called Belmont Street) was largely unpaved at the time and had several steep grades; many people chose to travel the Boston Post Road in Northborough instead. The Boston-Worcester Turnpike, however, was almost a straight course from start to finish; this



1922 ice storm, Main Street.

Courtesy of Lucy Nason.

characteristic attracted developers interested in a rapid interurban trolley line.

The Boston and Worcester Electric Company was organized in December 1902. It soon began construction on the thirty-one miles of its Trolley Air Line from Chestnut Hill to the Worcester boundary, where it met the Worcester Consolidated line. The Trolley Air Line ran along the Turnpike from Boston until it reached White's Corner in Southborough. It then stopped following the Turnpike and veered south onto five miles of private way across Westborough's present Washington Lane, Hundreds Road, and Flanders Road. The trolley tracks crossed East Main Street to reach Lyman Street opposite the entrance of today's Julio's Plaza. This route avoided the hills on Westborough's section of the Turnpike, inclines that the trolleys didn't have the power to climb.

The Boston-Worcester trolley cars stopped only at designated stations along the route; at Lyman Street there was a wooden waiting station for the convenience of travelers. From Lyman Street where the tracks crossed the local Marlborough-Westborough trolley line, the Trolley Air Line continued through the woods (behind Gannon Motors) until it joined the Turnpike at Park Street. From Park to Otis Street the trolley track ran up the middle of the Turnpike (Belmont Street) with a lane on each side. It crossed the Northborough-Westborough trolley line at Milk Street.

The first Boston-Worcester interurban trolley ran on June 26, 1903, and the line soon gained a reputation for punctuality and speed. The cars on the Boston Trolley Air Line operated at the highest average speed of any trolley line in Massachusetts. The trolley cars on this Boston and Worcester line were larger than the local trolleys; the forty-one-foot-long cars were dubbed "Battleships" and "Battleship Opens." The closed cars had seating for forty-four passengers; the open summer cars carried seventy passengers on rattan bench seats.

A combination car barn and substation was built in Westborough on the southwest corner of Otis and Belmont Streets. Here five or six trolleys were stored, light repairs done, and cars painted. A fire in this substation in February 1915 destroyed five open trolleys. The motors of these summer trolleys had been transferred to snowplow trolleys, so the cars couldn't be removed from the car barn on their own power and therefore were lost to the flames.

In 1909 a limited express service from Boston was initiated with stops only at White's Corner and Worcester. This trip took just one hour and forty-five minutes. The high speed trolleys began carrying freight in 1912 to compete with the Boston and Albany railroad service. Two freight houses were built on the Turnpike in Westborough, one at the northwest



Substation at Rt. 9 and Otis Street, burned 1915.

Courtesy of Glenn Parker.

corner of Lyman Street and the other on the northwest corner of Park Street. After World War I, however, the high expenses and heavier reliance on trucks brought an end to the trolley freight service.

The Boston to Worcester Trolley Air Line continued to operate through the 1920s but was sold to the Boston, Worcester, and New York Street Railway in 1927. The era of the high speed trolley ended when the Boston-Worcester Turnpike was rebuilt as Route 9, a modern express highway, in 1930-1931. The last Boston to Worcester trolley ran on January 4, 1931. After that the B & W Bus Lines became the favored mode of mass transportation along this route.

Lake Chauncy Park

The sparkling water and pine groves at Lake Chauncy have long delighted those drawn to its shores, but never was this more true than during the heyday of Lake Chauncy Park in the early 1900s. Trolleys brought pleasure-seekers from the cities to the Westborough amusement park to dance, picnic, canoe, bowl, and even enjoy a vaudeville show.

The park itself had been developed by Samuel G. Henry in 1876 as a spot for public recreation. The town's celebration for the Centennial on July 4, 1876 included a colorful parade out to Lake Chauncy and activities at the park. Historian Edward Bates described the event: "The toasts and responses occupied two hours, after which came a series of athletic contests on land and water. There was a hurdle-race, a foot-race, a swimming-



Lake Chauncy Pavillion (est. 1901, burned 1949).

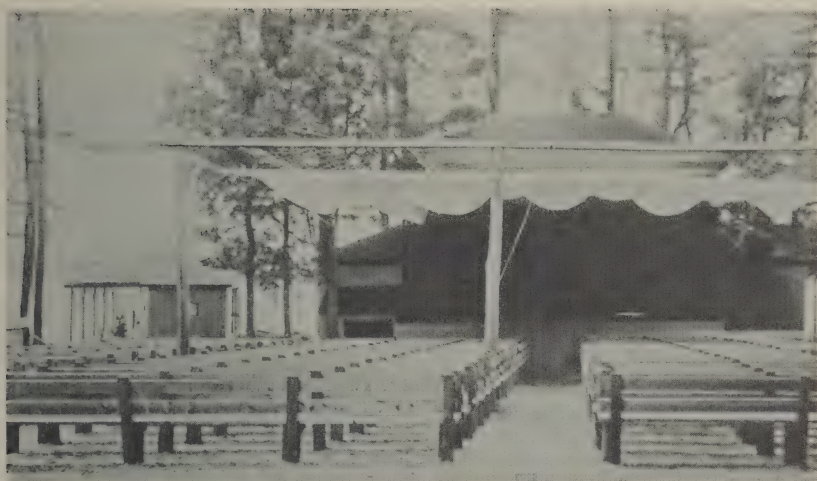
Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

match, a double-shell race, and other contests in which the local athletes furnished much amusement and excitement. As darkness approached, the throng returned, tired and happy, to the village."

Lake Chauncy continued to be a popular site for picnics and field days, even balloon ascensions, but its renown extended beyond Westborough when the Worcester Consolidated Railway Company bought the park in 1901. The trolley company increased its business by transporting city dwellers out into the country to amusement parks such as Chauncy Park. Local street cars brought people from Worcester, Marlborough, and Milford to the lake, while the high speed air trolley along the Turnpike delivered those from Boston. The trip from Westborough center cost a nickel, but the young often preferred to walk to save the change for refreshments and games at the Park.

The Worcester Consolidated opened a dance pavilion, restaurant, and theater at the park on June 22, 1901. Dances were held on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday nights. The June 29, 1901 *Chronotype* reported, "The dance pavilion was open for the lovers of terpsichore last Saturday evening, and a large crowd was present from Westborough, Marlborough, and Hudson, and everything was conducted in a credible manner, all acting the part of ladies and gentlemen. . . . It is the determination to keep the Park free from bums and rowdies, generally, and any one showing proclivities in that direction will get promptly dealt with."

"Every day and evening during the week there has been a good deal



Theater at Lake Chauncy Park.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

of life at the Park. Picnic parties have come from Worcester, and the theater has been occupied every afternoon and evening. E. W. Sawtelle gives exhibits of moving pictures every evening."

The dance pavilion and grove were located beyond the present beach (near Affectionately Eli's). Nearer to the State Hospital was the Rogers/Taft ice house along a semi-circular drive off Lyman Street. To the right, behind the dance hall, a theater was built in a natural amphitheater. At first the theater was held in a tent, later a more permanent structure was erected for the vaudeville and movies shown there. Mr. Lloyd Smith recalled, "I saw my first silent movie out at Lake Chauncy at the little theater with benches. For a dime we could see a film, but listening to the piano player accompany the action was half the fun."

In 1904 the trolley company leased the Park to Michael J. Cominsky, who ran the amusement park for the next twenty years. During this time candlepin bowling alleys were added in a building connected to the pavilion. A small refreshment stand stood in front of the bowling alley. Lively baseball games, races, and horseshoe competitions were held in the raised field in front of the pavilion. Those who weren't so energetic could swing on the lawn swings or walk through the gardens.

Rowboats and canoes could be rented at the boathouse in the grove. This boathouse had been the original pavilion before 1900. Strapping young men in straw hats rented canoes and paddled their sweethearts out



Boat house at Lake Chauncy Park.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

onto Lake Chauncy to listen to the strains of the dance music in the moonlight.

Lloyd Smith remembered, "We had wonderful picnics at Chauncy when the whole family went out there on a Saturday or Sunday. The Board of Trade Field Day would start with a race at the Square and end at the Lake. There would be competitions held like dashes, three-legged races, and horseshoes." Lake Chauncy Park attracted not only individual families for picnics but hosted factory outings, Grange field days, and ethnic picnics.

The Chauncy dance pavilion with its superb dance floor became a landmark. In the 1920s the Park was purchased by Charles Whelan's family, who also owned the Mosley-on-the-Charles dance hall. Whelan managed the Park until it closed in 1949. "At first we had check dancing where you could buy a strip of tickets for five cents each," he says. "There was a man at every entrance to collect the tickets. The couples would dance for about five minutes, then the floor would be emptied for the next dance." Those who were not dancing could sit on the veranda surrounding the pavilion, listen to the music, and watch the whirling pairs within. The top New England dance bands played at Lake Chauncy, and it's said that Babe Ruth danced there.

In later years, the Park catered to large outings; in the 1930s and 1940s groups of 5,000 could be accommodated on the grounds. The dance pavilion itself could hold 2,000 people at any one time. Picnic tables were

set up all around the grounds, within the pavilion, and in the nearby beer garden. When the picnic lunch was over, the pavilion would be converted to a roller skating rink. In the evening it was changed back to a dance floor. Whelan adds, "People came from all over the state to Chauncy. There were even special Lake Chauncy buses run from surrounding towns with admission to the dance included in the price of the bus ticket."

Lake Chauncy Park offered the lighthearted dancing, bowling, picnics, boating, and roller skating until 1949. On May 28 of that year, a fire started in the kitchen during an outing and destroyed the dance pavilion, bowling alley, pool hall, and beer garden.

The magic of Lake Chauncy, however, was captured forever in this 1908 song entitled "All Aboard for Chauncy":

*"When you want a good time, with a charmer divine
Tis the one place you're longing to go.
When you get tired of dancing to music entrancing
Then take in the vaudeville show
You can sit at your ease, in the shade of the trees
With your Mabel or sweet Kittie Clancy
There is only one place to be found on the map
Tis the place that they call dear old Chauncy."*

World War I

On April 6, 1917 the United States entered World War I, and Westborough became enmeshed in the war effort. Many young men enlisted, and before the war was over 250 Westborough citizens had served in its armed forces during this "war to end all wars."

As the June 8, 1917 *Chronotype* reports, "Two hundred and sixty-four men liable for army service under the selective draft law were registered in Westborough Town Hall. The number was a surprise to the registration officers, who had previously assumed not more than 200 would be affected. . . . Of the total number enumerated forty-five were registered as aliens; this fact also provided a surprise to registrars. About twenty-five of these were Boston & Albany railroad employees with temporary homes in a (box)car within the town limits. They were of various nationalities, there being included in the group sons of Italy, Greece, Albania, and other lands across the sea. They were a jolly, laughing set of men, many who had seen service in the recent Balkan Wars."

The American Red Cross soon organized women locally to work in knitting and sewing workshops, as well as sessions for rolling bandages. The Westborough Library was established as a Red Cross work center with sewing machines and tables set up in the art hall on the second floor.

Those working on surgical dressing worked at three tables in the main hall, and the study room served as their storage area. Many of the industrious volunteers were young women who labored in the factories by day and worked for the Red Cross by night.

The women knit sweaters, mufflers, socks, wristers, and helmets to send to the armed forces. From their sewing machines issued shirts, pajamas, washclothes, and bandages. The patients and staff at Westborough State Hospital and the Lyman School residents also helped with this effort.

The Red Cross organized town fund raisers: one collected gold and silver as the November 23, 1917 *Chronotype* attests: "The Melting Pot Campaign will begin November 26, and young ladies of the town will solicit offerings of gold, silver, and other precious metals to be sold for the benefit of the local Red Cross Fund. Almost every household has one old-fashioned piece of jewelry or table silver that will be cheerfully given for this purpose. . . . A unique and pleasing feature of this campaign is that it is not asking for any money, but for any old silver or gold you may have."

School children were also involved in the war effort. They planted twenty school gardens on land donated by Noah Nason. Aided by members of the PTA, Women's Club, and Grange, the children not only increased local food production but learned to garden at the same time.

By early 1918 shortages were felt in some consumer products, especially in sugar and certain foods. The local newspaper printed the United States



World War I ceremony, April 1917.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

Food Administration appeal for Americans to "serve the cause of freedom" by using more corn to save wheat, to eat more fish and beans to save meat, to use fat sparingly, and to substitute syrups for sugar.

State guidelines were issued about closing hours for businesses and stores to conserve energy, particularly coal. Offices, banks, and other buildings were not to be heated after noon Saturday or all day on Sundays and holidays. These businesses were to open at 9 a.m. and close at 5 p.m., but markets and pharmacies were allowed extended hours. Theaters, moving picture houses, saloons, bowling alleys, billiard halls, and dance halls were all to close at 10 p.m.

All inside and outside lighting was reduced, and factories were asked to arrange hours to use daylight and to relieve peak load. Regulations stated, "Every night except Saturday shall be a 'Lightless Night': business organizations are forbidden to use interior electric lights after closing, and all outside electric lights except when necessary for public safety or required by law."

Those families with a relative serving in the armed forces put a blue star in the window. A gold star shone from the window in a home where their serviceman had been killed.

At the close of the war, Westborough was so anxious to hear of peace that the town rushed headlong into celebrating a false armistice day. The November 8, 1918 *Chronotype* described the scene, "Like all patriotic communities hereabouts, Westboro turned itself loose with joyful acclaim when peace reports came in yesterday afternoon. Whistles tooted, all the big bells were rung, a great crowd gathered. The Lyman School band responded promptly to the patriotic call for all hands to join the jubilee. They played patriotic airs in the public square. Everybody sang. Local orators addressed the people, but the words were lost in the din. All the fireworks in town were touched off. Flags by the hundreds were waved triumphantly by women, girls, and boys. A parade was quickly organized. The joyful procession passed through the principal streets."

When peace was officially declared on November 11, 1918, Westborough celebrated even more heartily with a two-day holiday. Bells tolled, factory whistles sounded, and a parade with a mile of marchers was organized. This time the *Chronotype* reported, "There was joy expressed on every hand. After they hung the Kaiser from a tree in effigy, he got his final trimming at the fountain. The crowd burned him at the stake. A great bonfire burned in the Square during the evening hours."

There were eight Westborough men who gave their lives for their country during World War I. Westborough's American Legion Post #163, established in 1919, was originally named for one of these men—Earle



Westborough's Veterans following World War I at Town Hall.

Courtesy of the Old Timers Club.

B. Stowell. Stowell was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for "extraordinary heroism" near St. Remy, France, on September 12, 1918. Corporal Stowell led a charge on a German machine gun nest, captured the guns, and took twelve prisoners. He was badly wounded and died shortly thereafter. The names of Westborough's World War I casualties were later inscribed on the war memorial in the Square as a constant reminder of their heroism.



TURBULENT TIMES 1920-1940

Bay State Abrasives

Since its founding in November of 1922, Bay State Abrasives has become the second largest grinding wheel manufacturer in the nation. The company has played a major role in the modern history of Westborough—until the 1960s it was the dominant industry and largest employer in town.

It was the trolley, or vestiges of it, that initially brought Bay State to Westborough. The company's three founders—Orello Buckner, Leonard Krull, and George Bullard—left Norton Company in Worcester to establish an abrasive company on their own in the early 1920s. According to James Brigham, Manager of Marketing Services, "One of the main reasons Bay State located in Westborough was the availability of the vacant power plant and chimney on Union Street that had been owned by the electric street railway. The founders built the first kiln in the base of the powerhouse chimney. For a minimum investment, they could begin manufacture."

George Bullard, who contributed much to the construction of the mechanical and electrical equipment of the original plant, decided to leave the company in 1927 to establish his own abrasives firm, Bullard Abrasives. The other two founders continued with Bay State until their retirement in the late 1950s.

Leonard M. Krull (1891-1969) was born in the Netherlands and came to the United States at age five. A graduate of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, he worked in the sales engineering department at Norton Company from 1915 to 1922. Krull became Treasurer of the newly formed Bay State and served as its traveling salesman during those first years. A prominent citizen of Westborough, Krull was charter member and first president of the Kiwanis Club in 1924. Not only did he serve on the town's Finance Committee for seventeen years but on the Board of Appeals as well. He was also a trustee of Worcester Polytechnic Institute and the Westborough Savings Bank and a director and vice-president of the Westboro First National Bank. He and his wife Polly lived at 140 West Main Street, across from the Country Club.

Orello S. Buckner (1893-1978) was born in Urbana, Illinois, the son of a Universalist minister. He graduated from the University of Illinois in 1916 with a degree in ceramic engineering. From 1916 to 1922 he was employed at Norton Company, working as a ceramic expert of the Norton Japanese plant. Noted for his energy and self-discipline, Buckner acted as architect, brick tender, and general laborer during the first years of the company. Later he concentrated on manufacture and research and eventually held twelve patents relating to abrasive manufacturing or products. Buckner served as President of Bay State from 1916 until he retired in 1958. A resident of Northborough, he was for twenty years a corporator and trustee of the Westborough Savings Bank.

The November 1927 *Bay State News*—the fifth anniversary issue—described the creation of Bay State Abrasives in the former power plant of the Consolidated Street Railway: "By 1922, it (the power plant) had



Street Railway Power House & Bay State Abrasives

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library and Bay State

been idle and unused for more than 10 years. With its broken windows, rotting woodwork and the dust and debris of many years accumulated in it, it was far from the kind of building any company would want to begin business in. Bay State started there because it had little choice."

"The chimney is 40 feet square at the base and 115 feet high and could be used for draft for the first kiln. It was near a railroad siding, so coal delivery was easy, and (probably most important at that time) the Consolidated was willing to lease it for an amount of money which could be afforded."

The small kiln was constructed during the disastrous winter of December 1922 when the water for making mortar froze every night and had a skim of ice on it during the day. The *Bay State News* article added, "By days and nights of unremitting toil and great discomfort during the bitter winter of 1922-23, the building was made habitable, the first kiln built, and basic equipment procured, altered, restored and put into operation. It was several months before sufficient equipment and machinery could be readied to embark on the making of products and finding customers for them. In the mid-1920s the first sticks and honing stones were made, and these and other products have since poured into the mainstream of American industry in ever increasing amounts."

During those first years, Bay State Abrasives solicited orders through the mail. The 1927 *Bay State News* offered this anecdote, "Polly (Fairbanks, later Mrs. Krull) goes after the mail each morning, and Gen (Farquhar) goes up each afternoon. On her way back down Union Street, Geneva holds up as many fingers as there are orders in the mail, signaling to Buck and Mr. Krull who usually stand on the stair platform over Union Street."

There were twenty-nine employees at Bay State in those days, with a weekly payroll of \$800. To accommodate its growth, Bay State leased the old Foster-Richardson Bedstead Factory which had discontinued its business in 1924. With this facility, located where the present Bay State research and engineering building is now, the floor space available to the plant was doubled.

Bay State continued to expand and to require additional space. In 1928 it acquired land adjoining the plant with frontage on Union Street and land east of the civic playground on East Main Street. Deciding against buying the bedstead factory, in 1932 the company constructed two wings onto the original plant.

Earl Hughes (1892-1980) joined the company as a partner in 1936. Hughes graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1914 with a degree in civil engineering and worked eighteen years at Norton as Assis-

tant Sales Manager. At Bay State he became the Sales Manager, Secretary, and Clerk of the corporation. Hughes built a sales and distribution organization that encouraged the rapid expansion of the business.

The Bartlett Box and Lumber Company of Union Street was bought and restored in 1936 as a storage area for raw materials. New mechanical and chemical labs were built. The former Armour meat packing plant was used as the diamond wheel plant until a new facility was built by Avco Corporation.

The entire plant of Carter Abrasives, a manufacturer of rubber bonded wheels in Rhode Island, was purchased and its machinery and equipment brought to Westborough in 1937. The company continued to grow the next year with the acquisition of the Brantford Grinding Wheel Company in Brantford, Ontario. The original kiln was torn down in 1939 to provide room for the machine shop. The eight beehive kilns were replaced during World War II with tunnel kilns and rotary kilns. In 1943 employment stood at 700 with three shifts operating twenty-four hours a day.

To provide a recreational and social center for its employees, Bay State purchased the Keating Building on East Main Street. The interior was remodeled to include a bowling alley and meeting room, a basement shooting gallery, and billiard and pool rooms. To fully round out its recreation program, Bay State purchased the Westborough Country Club in 1945. The Country Club, established in 1921, consisted at that time of a clubhouse, a shed, a locker house, and 129 acres of land, valued at \$9,000. The Country Club golf course continued to be open to town residents and its former members as well as to Bay State employees.

The postwar period from 1946-49 brought the addition of a resinoid wheel department, more tunnel kilns, and a washing and screening plant to reclaim abrasives from scrap materials. Since 1950 the machine shop, research and development, drafting and engineering, and other departments have expanded into new facilities. The periodic kilns were replaced by faster, easily loaded tunnel kilns.

Avco Corporation, based in Stratford, Connecticut, purchased Bay State Abrasives from its founders in the fall of 1965. Under Avco, the company again expanded. The resinoid department was increased, the new diamond wheel department added, and an impressive research and engineering facility built on the site of the Foster-Richardson bedstead factory. The old Bartlett Box Factory was torn down to make way for new construction.

Dallas-based Dresser Industries bought Bay State Abrasives in November 1971. At that time Dresser did not wish to acquire the Country Club as well, so that parcel was put up for sale. After much study

and discussion, the Town of Westborough bought the Country Club in 1974 with the aid of state and federal funds.

Presently Bay State encompasses more than eighteen acres under one roof. It manufactures a complete line of vitrified and resinoid grinding wheels, abrasive segments, honing stones, diamond wheels, and sanding fabrics. Production facilities for Bay State are located not only in Westborough, but in California, Indiana, Ontario, Germany, Luxembourg, and New Zealand (licensee). In 1984, more than 1,100 workers are employed at the Bay State facility in the heart of Westborough.

Frank and Fannie Forbes

Westborough's Community House, Forbes Building, Hickox Building, Spurr House, Kirkside, and Town Hall are all tangible expressions of the civic spirit and love of Westborough shown by a remarkable couple, Frank and Fannie Forbes. Scholarships, endowments and many types of community beautification are also part of their legacy to the town.

Francis White Forbes was born in 1852, the youngest member in the fifth generation of Forbes to be born at 187 West Main Street. "My father was about six when his father died, and he took over the farm chores as he grew up," says Mary Forbes Foster. "Every morning he would drive the cows to pasture at Jackstraw Meadow before he walked to the district school." Mr. Forbes attended Westborough High School and eventually established a dry goods business on West Main Street.

He married Jane Nason, and their daughter was Helen Cady Forbes, a writer of children's books, which were often based on childhood memories of Westborough. Miss Forbes, after serving as a librarian at New York City Library, returned to live in the Forbes homestead on West Main Street.

After the death of his first wife, Frank Forbes met Fannie Hooker on a visit to Chicago. Fannie, born in 1860, was the daughter of Henry M. Hooker, a successful businessman and one of the early developers of Chicago. Frank and Fannie Forbes were married in 1886 and returned to make their home in Westborough.

The couple settled into the house at 12 High Street and here their three children were born: Henry, Florence (Homans) and Mary (Foster). "My parents loved Westborough and even had their summer home at Lake Chauncy, one of the few private homes there at the time," says Mary Foster. "In the early 1900s we would fish, swim, pick berries, and row over to meet the trolley. Later during World War I they built another summer home on Jackstraw Hill."

Frank Forbes became a businessman in Boston, and both he and his



Frank and Fannie Forbes.
Courtesy of Mary Forbes Foster.

wife soon were actively involved in community life. In 1913 the Forbes paid for the extension of Winter Street from Summer through to Phillips Street to improve the route for both pedestrians and motorists. They later built sidewalks along High Street.

Seeing a need for a pleasant home for the elderly in the days before Social Security and Medicare, Mr. and Mrs. Forbes in 1917 built and endowed Kirkside on Church Street as living quarters for the aged. The first matron, Mrs. Alma Coffeen, made Kirkside a gracious home; the facility was in operation until 1950, when it was sold as a parish house to the Congregational Church.

"My parents wanted to remove eyesores and construct useful community buildings in their place," explains Mrs. Foster. "In 1924 my parents decided to construct a building that would be available to as many local organizations as possible. The Forbes Community House was built on the ruins of the burned straw hat factory on East Main Street. My father took part in the construction himself, leveling the ground and pushing a wheelbarrow. There were two tennis courts, a football field, and a playground included because schools then did not have those facilities."

Frank and Fannie Forbes also recognized the need for a new high school. They decided to construct one on the site of the burned Whitney Hotel on the corner of West Main and Parkman Streets. In 1926 the Forbes High School was completed and presented to the town. It housed the latest types of laboratories, gymnasium, shop, and cooking rooms and displayed fine craftsmanship in the carved woodwork, Venetian glass, and Wedgewood plaques. The Forbes also created a scholarship for high school students and a fund for special programs.

When the funds appropriated for the new Town Hall in 1927 proved insufficient, the Forbes donated \$50,000 to complete the construction. To improve the appearance of downtown, Mr. Forbes had a new business block built on 4-6 West Main Street. In 1930 the Forbes erected a Post Office for Westborough on the square (present Hickox Building). Much of the construction work for these projects was done by the local contractor Peter DeArmond and Sons.

The Spurr House on Parkman Street, now home of the American Legion and the Historical Society, was purchased and given to the town by the Forbes in 1933. They also gave the adjoining land to the town as playground facilities for the Forbes School.

Frank Forbes was dedicated to Boy Scouting. After serving as president of the Algonquin Council, he established a trust fund for Boy Scout work in Westborough. Mr. Forbes also served as treasurer of the State Hospital and Westborough Savings Bank and as a trustee of the



Kirkside, 8 Church St., built 1917.

Photo by Paula Skog.



Community House, E. Main St., built 1924.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.



Dedication of high school with Forbes Family.

Courtesy of Mary Forbes Foster.

Westborough Library during its construction in 1908.

Fannie Forbes died in 1947 and Frank Forbes in 1949 at age ninety-seven. Their memorials live on in the many civic buildings and improvements that residents of Westborough enjoy to this day.

Westborough Business: 1920-1940

Westborough in these years nurtured over fifty farms and dairies on its outskirts, but its center was dedicated to commerce. Many workers were employed at Bay State Abrasives, Westborough Underwear, Rasmussen Shoe, Kenworthy Brothers, Marcus Mason, Montan Treating Company, and J. S. Mason Narrow Fabrics. Westborough State Hospital and Lyman School also provided work for supervisors, nurses, and teachers.

At this time, two flower wholesalers, Paul Brigham and Archibald MacGuffog, added beauty as well as employment to the town.

Westboro Conservatories

Flowers have been grown commercially in Westborough since the late 1800s. The Westboro Conservatories on Lyman Street were first run by the Midgleys, then taken over by Paul Brigham in 1912.

Brigham concentrated on raising carnations in his six greenhouses with 40,000 square feet under glass. The greenhouses were located on the west side of Lyman Street and along Route 9. He sold the blossoms wholesale to florists in New York and North Carolina, shipping them first by freight

BRIGHAM'S PLANTS and FLOWERS

FOR

CHRISTMAS

POINSETTIAS, \$1 to \$3.00

CYCLAMEN, \$1.50

AFRICAN VIOLETS, \$1.00

BEGONIAS, \$1.00 and \$2.00

AZALEAS, \$1.50

CHERRY TREES, \$1 00

Visit Our Greenhouses, Lyman St., or

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on the high speed trolley line to Boston and later by train.

Paul Brigham continued growing carnations until he sold the business in 1960. The Bergevins ran the greenhouse until the 1970s when the land was sold as the site of Caldors in Julio's Westborough Plaza.

MacGuffog's Greenhouses

Archibald MacGuffog was born in Scotland and learned to cultivate carnations in England before he settled in Westborough. He worked ten years with Paul Brigham at the Westborough Conservatories, and together the men built two large greenhouses on ten acres along Route 9 near Lyman Street (Yankee Village Plaza). In 1929 MacGuffog established his own carnation business at this location.

Ruth Harrington Hunter, who worked for MacGuffog, recalls, "When I first started working at MacGuffog's in the 1930s, they were the second largest growers of carnations in New England. All the flowers were grown in two 360-foot-long greenhouses facing Route 9 and four smaller greenhouses. The greenhouses were heated by steam from a coal boiler at first, then they converted to oil."

"The plants were grown from cuttings in the winter, then planted in flats and field grown until they were planted in the greenhouses. They bloomed from September to the following spring. I know one year they considered they had grown a million flowers."

"I worked as a cutter the first five years and learned to sort for quality and to package the flowers in fan-shaped cartons for shipping. We cut an average of 10,000 to 18,000 flowers a day and shipped from September to late June. The carnations were sent Railway Express out of Westborough, mostly to the East coast. They traveled about five days (packed in ice in the summer) mainly to South Carolina. Here they were distributed to other parts of the South and to the islands like Puerto Rico and the Bahamas."

MacGuffog's daughter Sylvia (Mrs. Esteban Valencia) eventually took over the business and established a reputation as a creative floral designer. She opened a retail florist shop and in 1961 was chosen to supervise the floral decorations for John Kennedy's inaugural balls. The January 16, 1961 *Worcester Telegram* reports, "When John F. Kennedy steps through the doors at the three inaugural balls he is scheduled to attend Friday evening, he will be greeted by massive floral displays created by a daughter of his native state—Mrs. Sylvia Valencia of Westboro. Mrs. Valencia, president of MacGuffog's Inc., has been named by the Carnation Growers of America to design and supervise the arrangement of all flowers to be used at the three inaugural balls." Many of the 50,000 carnations used

in the arrangements came from MacGuffog's greenhouses and other area growers.

The MacGuffog florist shop burned in 1966, and the business was discontinued upon Sylvia Valencia's death a few years later. The rows upon rows of pink, white, and red carnations have since been replaced by a fast food restaurant and a variety of stores.

Prohibition

The 18th Amendment, or Volstead Act, was ratified in January 1919 and ushered in the era of Prohibition. The Amendment did not forbid drinking but did ban the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquors. According to Sid Aptt, "Prohibition made out of the general public either a maker of alcoholic beverages or sellers of the same. It was possible to go to any local store and buy ingredients to make home brew."

In Westborough, as in other towns, drinking continued but became much more adventurous. People in the know could buy the illegal "hooch" or liquor in speakeasies and farm kitchens all over town. Although the locations shifted rapidly to keep one step ahead of the law, speakeasies or stills were known to be on Cottage Street, Brigham Street, Elm Street, Milk Street, Morse Street, Otis Street, and Route 9. "At the Gray Goose located far out on Upton Road one, for the mere price of fifty cents, could buy a mixture of hard cider and wild grape wine, which could be very easy going but a very deceptive drink," says Aptt.

A report in the August 16, 1929 *Chronotype* says, "Police raided the farm for the fourth or fifth time last Saturday night, seizing quantities of home brew and much equipment used in manufacturing intoxicants. . . The police entered the house between 10 and 11 o'clock, when business appeared to be brisk at the establishment. Occupants of autos parked at or near the yard made haste to get away. . . Chief Humphrey reports that many young men and girls in autos appeared to be patronizing the place and that public safety was being menaced by the drivers who whizzed in and out of Morse Street."

In December 1933 Prohibition was repealed 3 to 1. Westborough, a no-license town at the turn of the century, had voted to go "wet" before 1910 and had for a short time become the mecca of those seeking strong spirits. With the repeal of the 18th Amendment, Westborough returned to its former ways complete with the Golden Roosta and A & A saloons adding an Old West aura to South Street during the 1930s and 1940s.

The Mosquito Fleet

The infamous "Mosquito Fleet" was a group of building-leaners who

spent their days idling around the town square. "They did no one any harm," says Sid Aptt, "but they had their regular hangouts – places they could sit and soak up the sun. The fleet sometimes hung out at Grogan's Rock down the tracks eastbound, on the rim of Cedar Swamp. It was a big rock with an overhanging edge that made for protection from the elements and a place for a cooking fire. They also hung out at the ledges on Upton road and under the platform at the Brigham Street freight depot."

"Summer was the time for the fleet to gather at the elm tree in the square (in front of the Westboro Hotel near Brigham Street). This tree had a curbing all around the base, which made it an ideal seat with sun or shade as the crew desired."

"The Mosquito Fleet's main staple was so-called 'canned heat.' This was made from Sterno, an ingredient that came in a small tin can and was used under a one-burner stove. It was made of part glycerine and mostly denatured alcohol, which is the part they would use. By scooping the contents into a rag and then squeezing the alky into a bottle, they could mix this with water to a desired consistency to make 'canned heat'. Now this combination to the average person would be poison, but the crew by stages had become almost immune to the danger."

Dacey's Diner

There has been a diner at the head of Union Street for over sixty years. Elizabeth "Liz" Kane remembers, "My aunt and uncle, Agnes and Thomas Dacey, started the diner here in the 1920s. It was brought from Worcester on a flatbed trailer, but it was a regular diner on wheels. Dacey's was a very busy place for breakfast, lunch, and supper. The workers at Bay State came up at lunchtime, the kids came down from school, and many of the State Hospital workers stopped in while waiting for the bus. The diner was especially famous for the chicken soup my aunt made on Saturday noon. Whenever there was a parade in town, everybody stopped at Dacey's Lunch Cart. A hot dog was a nickel, so was a cup of coffee or an ice cream cone. A hamburger was ten cents. In the 1920s and '30s people driving through town always seemed to stop at Dacey's." The diner, right in the heart of town, is now the Center Cafe.

The Rotary

Westborough's sense of civic pride was challenged in 1931 when the planning board presented plans to the Town Meeting for the improvement of the town square. At the time the square was wide open with a tangle of wires overhead and a crisscross of unused trolley tracks underfoot. The old railroad depot and tracks on Brigham Street had fallen into



Westborough Center and Rotary.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.

disrepair. Westborough needed a facelift, so to undertake the project the Town Meeting voted \$2,000 with Mrs. Frank Forbes contributing an additional \$2,000.

To eliminate existing traffic hazards, a rotary plan was adopted including a central circle (100 feet in diameter) planted with grass and elm trees. A memorial flagpole and cement walks were included on this circle. Two triangular islands at South Street and East Main Street completed the rotary design. New street lighting with underground wiring was planned to create a great "white way" in the town's center.

The contract to construct the rotary was awarded to Peter DeArmond from Westborough. First in order was removing the horse watering fountain in this former Fairbanks Square. Then the old trolley lines and rails

on East and West Main Streets, South Street, and Milk Street were torn up.

The next step in beautifying the town square was the construction of a new Post Office at the head of Brigham Street (Hickox Building). This handsome building, donated to the town by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Forbes, was dedicated on Patriot's Day, April 19, 1931.

Frank Forbes was quoted in the *Chronotype* that week saying, "The main purpose of my undertaking, which for many years was believed to be an impossible accomplishment, was the purchase of the railroad land facing the square, the removal of the tracks and old station, and the concealment, as far as possible, of what has been aptly termed the town's 'black eye!' "

The motorists of Westborough slowly became acclimated to rotary rules. Their request for a stop light at the Milk Street intersection was denied, however, since fewer than 500 cars were observed passing through the square each hour.

With the new street lights installed and overhead wires banished, the Westborough Rotary war memorial was completed and dedicated on November 11, 1931. A spirited parade and patriotic ceremony marked the occasion. On the granite base of the 60-foot flagpole were engraved the names of Westborough soldiers killed in battle. Four bronze eagles adorned the base.

The Rotary has been and continues to be a focal point of Westborough—there was even a *Worcester Gazette* column "Round the Rotary" each week. Christmas trees are erected and decorated with hand-made ornaments each December on the Rotary, and it is here that Memorial Day speeches are given. It is also here that motorists idle in late afternoon traffic jams, for the traffic plan devised in 1931 is insufficient to handle the 15,000 or so cars that pass through Westborough daily in the 1980s.

Route 9

As the automobile grew in popularity, the need for an efficient highway network became paramount. In the mid-1920s a controversy raged over which route to improve between Boston and Worcester—the Boston-Worcester Turnpike or the Boston Post Road. The straightest thoroughfare was the old Turnpike, as the Boston-Worcester Street Railway Company had discovered in 1901, and those championing the Turnpike won out. The February 8, 1929 *Chronotype* stated, "Announcement made this week by the State Department of Public Works assures the building of a broad modern highway along the old Boston and Worcester Turnpike route



Route 9 at E. Main St. Overpass.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

through Westborough, the first section to be started next year and 25 miles to be completed by 1933."

The new highway, hailed as a road "to surpass all others in the United States in width, general utility, provision for public safety and cost per mile," was built in three sections from Worcester through Westborough. The cost of the twelve miles of highway from Worcester to Westborough was estimated at \$2,200,000 or slightly less than \$200,000 per mile. Plans called for a central grass parkway, a four-lane concrete highway, and two bituminous gravel parking lanes on each side.

After thirty years' use, the Boston and Worcester trolley tracks and wires along the Turnpike were taken down in January 1931. The Perini Company had been awarded the bid to build the section from Lyman Street to White's Corner in Southborough.

"I remember as a kid watching them dig out the deep swamp near Friendly's at the end of Bellows Road," says Tom Fryer of the local DPW. "They spread dirt on top, then blasted out the mud, and the dirt would fall back down. Route 9 was paved with concrete and made into a four-lane highway in 1931, but it wasn't widened until 1948. They haven't done much to it since then—it's just filled up with cars."

The eight miles of highway between Lyman Street and Lake Quinsigamond in Shrewsbury were completed in September 1931, and autos were reported "whizzing" along the former Belmont Street, now the new Turn-

pike. This route was soon landscaped, a reflection of the motorists' pride in their new highway.

According to the May 6, 1932 *Chronotype*, "Between Otis and Milk Street in Westborough maples have been set along the south side of the highway to hide in time the swampy archipelago adjacent to the town sewer beds. Flowering shrubs set along the north side of the road include a lot of forsythia, and the park department engineers have agreed to plant rambler roses beside the highway protection fences and higher wire fences that separate the right of way from pastures.

"Grass in the turnpike parkway in the Westborough section of the highway is growing vigorously and the long stretch of greensward is attracting attention of motorists. Samuel DeBoer on the Moorland Farm along the turnpike (Speedway) is planting many acres of celery, lettuce and garden vegetables. Along the eastern part of Westborough and in Fayville hundreds of evergreens have been planted and thousands of flowering shrubs have been arranged in rows."

The old Boston and Worcester Turnpike had been bordered by farms in Westborough, and much of this land remained agricultural. Before long, however, tourists cabins—often accompanied by a gas pump and lunchroom—sprang up along Route 9 on the eastern end of town. Near the Southborough border were Bill and Inez Hooper's cabins (New England Electric) and close by, Bob and Emma Farrar's cabins. Across the highway on the northside were Cora Waite's Twilight Cabins and lunchroom (Mathieu Realty). A few of the Fogg cabins are left standing today near the junction of Park Street and Cuddy Realty. Before the introduction of motels, these roadside cabins served as stopovers for travelers who were en route to Boston or Hartford.

Cabins, restaurants, greenhouses, and gas stations alternated with farmland along Route 9 in the 1940s and 1950s, until the large farms were totally replaced by business concerns. In the 1980s the Highway Business Zone was adopted by Town Meeting to control the growth and appearance of business along the highway. Subsequent building is well-spaced and landscaped, but the volume of traffic has skyrocketed from those early days in 1931.

The Westborough Airport

Another important route was established in May 1932, an air route leading to the new airfield on Otis Street. "Westborough is now in the airport circuit through the establishment of a commercial flying field on Otis Street near the turnpike—a location considered exceptional through the contours of the land, the proximity to Worcester, and ease of access



Westborough Airport, formerly on Otis St., 1932-1979.

Photo by David Kubly.

by way of the best highway in New England," proclaimed the *Chronotype* of May 27, 1932.

Three brothers – Alfred, Lucien, and Albert Desjardin of the Desjardin Auto Service of Worcester opened the airport on about seventy-five acres of level land. The runway was built on a grassy strip 1,700 feet long, and hangars were constructed to hold the light aircraft. Alfred Desjardin, a licensed pilot with six years' experience, served as manager of the airport and soon started an aviation school and daily flying service.

The following year the airport was the scene of a tragic accident. A cabin monoplane never came out of a power dive and crashed, instantly killing the pilot/instructor and three passengers. Mrs. Alfred Desjardin, an eyewitness, reported in the November 3, 1933 *Chronotype*, "I saw patches of red ripped off the plane fly around. . . Then it headed for the airport hangar, changed directions a bit, missed hitting a tree, cleared the ell of the house and the barn, and crashed. It was over in a second. I think the plane was going about 200 miles an hour." Others saw the great wing of the monoplane break apart just before the craft's plummet.

The majority of the experiences at the airport were positive, however. Westborough Airport had occasion for great celebration during National Air Mail Week in 1938 when an airmail pouch was delivered from Palmer, Massachusetts, and another was dispatched. The special post cachet on the envelopes read, "National Air Mail Week, May 15-21,

1938 – Westborough, Mass.” A crowd and concert band was waiting to greet this one and only airmail delivery to Westborough.

In 1941 Kenneth Lynde bought the Westborough airport. On his retirement in 1972, the April 24 *Worcester Evening Gazette* reported, “Lynde and the airport were pioneers of a type of flying – small planes on grass fields. Since 1941 when he bought the airport here, Lynde has staged air shows attended by 5,000 persons; soloed 900 students; run a charter flight business that covered the U.S., Canada, and Mexico; and taught 250 students under the G.I. Bill. Many of the Westboro pilot’s former students have gone on to become captains with commercial airlines.”

In the same article Lynde comments, “This is a gem of a small airport. It’s not way out in the sticks, like so many. It has clear approaches, and an east-west runway with a prevailing westerly wind. Its location between Worcester and Boston is ideal.”

In the 1950s and 1960s the airport had yellow Piper Cubs and a few double-wingers. Residents and tourists alike were given an aerial view of the town at the rate of \$2 for seven minutes. By 1970 the airport had one 2,300 foot paved runway and two unpaved runways (1,250 and 1,700 feet) off Otis Street.

The fate of the Westborough Airport was decided at the 1979 Town Meeting. It was there the Airport Study Commission that had been appointed in 1969 presented plans for an expanded municipal airport. In 1970, the land in question had been purchased by Astra Pharmaceuticals, but the airport had continued on a lease basis. When Westborough citizens were asked to choose between a \$4.3 million airport and Astra’s industrial development of the property, the airport expansion was voted down. The days of flying into Westborough over Boston Hill and Lake Hocomocco were over.

The Depression

The Depression hit Westborough hard in 1929, but the town organized self-help programs in the face of the severe economic collapse. The self-employed workers and their families suffered badly; the many farmers in town may have been a little more self-sufficient, but they too lacked a source of revenue.

A variety of aid programs under local, state, and federal auspices was established. In 1930 the Westborough Women’s Club opened a Community Thrift Shop on West Main Street that continued for eight years. Here people could buy good used clothing for a nominal sum; clothes were given away to any individual who couldn’t pay.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced his New Deal in 1933,

the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was an important part of the plan. The November 24, 1933 *Chronotype* reported, "Scores of able and willing men who have been idle are now busily engaged in public works projects in Westborough under liberal grants of money from the treasury of the United States."

The civil works projects undertaken by the Town from 1933 to 1938 included the improvement of secondary roads, repairs to municipal buildings, a new bridge at the reservoir, brush-cutting, wood-splitting, and extermination of fruit tree pests. Some of the project labor was paid for by the state and federal government while the Town paid for the materials used in the projects. Young men worked also at the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in the nearby Upton State Forest, where they built fire roads and did forestry work.

By 1934 there were 274 Westborough residents employed in the WPA. The wages were \$.50 an hour for unskilled labor and \$1.20 an hour for skilled labor with the working week set at thirty hours per week. In awarding the jobs, preference was given to veterans and welfare recipients with dependents.

The program provided work for women as seamstresses and knitters.



Clover Farm Store, South St., 1930's.

Courtesy of Jean Daoust.

The second floor of the firehouse was transformed into a sewing room where thirty-five women sewed sheets, nightgowns, blankets, towels, and children's clothes. Women were also employed to knit sweaters for the young men working in the CCC.

In 1933 the National Recovery Administration (later ruled unconstitutional) was established to restore industry's vigor. As members of NRA, employers agreed to shorten the work week and increase wages. Westborough residents were urged to pledge to support only the "blue eagle" NRA businesses. As the August 25, 1933 *Chronotype* noted, "Employers, who are cooperating with the NRA program by decreasing the number of hours worked, increasing wages, and adding new employees to their forces, will be unable to continue if the consumers, the buying public, do not support them by patronizing only concerns displaying the blue eagle."

Food was distributed from the State Commodity Distribution Center on East Main Street to WPA employees and to recipients of welfare and old age assistance. The local Welfare Department issued cards identifying those eligible for this free food. In one week in 1938, for example, 2,555 pounds of oranges, 2,800 pounds of potatoes, and 700 pounds of rice were distributed. Each week food and flowers were packed in hampers by a different local organization to be sent to the needy through the Benevolent Fruit and Flower Mission in Boston.

Westborough benefited from such WPA projects as the rebuilding of Fisher and Chestnut Streets. Sidewalks and granite curbing were installed on Spring, Lincoln, Fay, Ruggles, Cross, and Grove Streets at this time.

It was not all gray skies and heavy hearts during those years. Benefit plays and concerts to support the Town Relief Fund were presented by the Grange, Kiwanis, and Women's Club to the delight of many residents. The Strand movie theater on Summer Street gave away glassware on gala gift nights and ran a weekly lottery for cash prizes.

STRAND THEATRE
WESTBORO
July 11 and 12
CASSEROLE COUPON No. 1

To receive Casserole it is necessary for you to have the THREE coupons-- Dates July 11 and 12; July 18 and 19; July 25 and 26.

Present All THREE Coupons with your admission on Aug. 1 or 2 and receive Casserole.

No Casserole given without the THREE Coupons.

AT MAC'S



Westboro's Oldest Purveyor of Quality

Food Products

Fresh Native CHICKENS, 5 to 6 lb ave	35c lb
Fresh Eastern Cut PORK SHOULDERS	14c lb
Fresh Dug CLAMS, for Steaming	
Swift's Premium Genuine Spring Legs of LAMB	25c lb
Boneless POT ROASTS	19c lb
Prime RIB ROASTS	19c; 25c lb
Sweet Pickled OX TONGUES	28c lb
Fancy Boneless SIRLOIN ROASTS	43c lb
SHOULDER ROASTS	28c lb
(delicious flavor, no bone, no waste)	
Old Fashioned SMOKED SHOULDERS	12c lb

SPECIAL—Friday and Saturday Only

Chamberlain's "LEADERSHIP" SHOULDERS

Regular price 18c lb..... Special 14c lb

HONEY HAMS, noted for their delicious flavor	20c lb
Our CORNED BEEF is becoming more popular every day because of it's delicious mild cure	
Fancy THICK RIB CORNED BEEF, no bone or waste	23c
Fancy BRISKET CORNED BEEF	25c lb

SPECIAL—

Large Size Fancy Fresh Milk Fed FOWL..... 89c each

FRESH NATIVE FRUITS and VEGETABLES

From Local Producers

Extra Fancy Fresh Dug Native Ripe POTATOES	
	\$1.75 bushel; 49c pk.
Native Red Ripe TOMATOES	5 lbs 25c
Fancy Fresh Native Elberta PEACHES	1/2 bu. bskt \$1.25
	small basket 35c
Red Ripe WATERMELONS	65c
SPINACH—SHELL BEANS—WAX BEANS—CORN	
Large Sweet Belle PEPPERS	25c dozen
Large Ripe Pink Meated MELONS	2 for 25c

Residents who grew up during the Depression have vivid memories of those times in Westborough. Ruth Welsh recalls, "My father was a self-employed plumber, and there was no work. My brother and I would go down the tracks where the coal train came in and pick up the dropped coal for the stove—that's how we kept warm. The Light Company put in a quarter meter for electricity. If you didn't have a quarter, your lights went out."

"All the kids, and sometimes the parents, too, went down the railroad tracks and picked blueberries and cowslip greens to eat. A very special treat was to sell blueberries for a dime and go to McCann's ice cream place

in the Keating building where they'd cut a pint of ice cream in two for you for a nickel."

Selectman Ray Welsh adds, "Homer Leet used to sell potato chips every Saturday night from his car on the corner of West Main and South. He made the chips downstairs under Creamer's furniture store on South Street, and for a nickel you could get a tremendous bag."

Belknap Emery remembers those days as well: "During the Depression we were all poor as church mice. Since we lived on a farm we never had any problem getting milk, vegetables, or cattle. But we didn't have any electricity on Chestnut Street until the Rural Electrification Act was passed in 1936. Father had the phone disconnected after Thanksgiving until April because that saved the \$3 a month for the phone bill. He also took the car off the road promptly after Thanksgiving and put in in the barn until spring."

Westborough survived the Depression with determination and ingenuity, but those hard times left their scar.



Westborough Country Club in 1938.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

The Westborough Country Club

The Westborough Country Club was founded in 1921 with 200 charter members. The property at 121 West Main Street included Fox and Turkey Hills, named for the foxes and their wild turkey prey that populated the slopes. The land and house originally belonged to Westborough's first set-

tlar Thomas Rice. In 1725 he sold the property to Lieutenant Edward Baker, who was named to Westborough's first school committee and was active in town politics as selectman, treasurer, and clerk from 1726-1760. The estate became known for its lavish entertainment under the Lieutenant's heir, Squire Joseph Baker. In the 1800s this house was moved to 115 West Main Street, and Moses Pollard built a rambling farmhouse on the site.

The April 29, 1921 *Chronotype* announced, "Westborough Country Club buys the Pollard Estate: Golf, Tennis, and all Outdoor Sports and Social Meetings Among Privileges. . . By the transfer of title the Country Club acquires the commodious farmhouse and other buildings and 129 acres of land admirably adapted to the purpose in view. These purposes, as set forth in the articles of the Club's constitution are, 'all kinds of athletic exercises, particularly golf, tennis, croquet, and other outdoor sports, and for the establishment and maintenance of places for reading rooms and social meetings.' "

The nine-hole golf course was laid out by Mr. Howe and clay tennis courts built. By Memorial Day 1921 golf enthusiasts in Westborough were playing on the new course.

Bay State Abrasives bought the Country Club for its employees' use in 1945 but continued to allow outside memberships. When Dresser Industries acquired Bay State in 1971, however, the Country Club was put on the market. After a comprehensive study, Westborough voted to purchase the Country Club in 1974 and has continued its operation to this day. Presently the land is used not only as a golf course but for cross-country skiing and tobogganning in the winter.

On the Shores of Lake Chauncy

Cunniff's Lodge

Westborough became a summer resort for city dwellers eager to taste country life with its quiet lanes, open meadows, and sparkling waters. They found a welcome at Cunniff's Lodge overlooking the beach at Lake Chauncy. Owner Joseph Cunniff remembers, "We opened the Lodge in 1937 and operated in the summer season until 1965. The Lodge had a capacity of about sixty, and the majority of the guests were from Boston and Connecticut cities. We offered an all-expense program that included trips to summer theaters, auto and horse tracks, Edaville Railroad, Plymouth, and Provincetown."

Robert Skog adds, "I used to work at Cunniff's Lodge in the late 1950s, and we took the guests everywhere. We even gave them waterskiing lessons on Lake Chauncy and took them on rides in a Piper Cub at the Westborough airport."



Cunniff's Lodge, Lyman St., 1937-1965.

Courtesy of Joseph Cunniff.

Cunniff's Lodge advertised in the *New York Times* as well as in the Boston papers. Tourists would arrive by rail or car for family vacations and even honeymoons. These summer guests enjoyed the scenic lake and woods that year-round residents often took for granted. After twenty-eight years Cunniff's Lodge closed its doors, and in 1969 the old building was burned by the town.

Entertainment

Entertainment centered around local functions—dinners and dances sponsored by the Women's Club, Grange, Knights of Columbus, and Masons as well as concerts and lectures in the Town Hall. Movies were a favorite pastime and were shown upstairs in the old Town Hall until it was torn down in 1928.

The Strand Theater

That year George Beede remodeled the old Forbes sleigh factory on Summer Street into Westborough's first movie house, the Strand Theater. The Strand opened on October 11, 1928. Adult tickets were 30 cents and children could be admitted for 10 cents. According to the local paper, "Opening to large audiences at two shows last evening, the new Strand Theater on Summer Street filled all expectations as a recreation center of high class. . . The new organ of the Strand made a distinct impression on the first night audience, many persons commenting also on the comfort of the seats as compared to the arrangements in the old town hall."

**—THE—
NEW STRAND THEATRE
WESTBORO, MASS.**

Make the Strand Theatre your theatre, where you will see all the latest and best photoplays; also hear the best and latest music on our new \$3,000 organ.

ART RAYFIELD at the Console

2 Shows Saturday Night, 6:45 and 9.
All other shows start at 8 through the week.

PROGRAM FOR WEEK DEC. 9

Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 9-10—

All Talking — Singing — Dancing
"ON WITH THE SHOW"

Vitaphone's first 100 Per Cent Natural Color Picture, All Talking, Singing and Dancing, with

Betty Compson, Arthur Lake, Sally O'Neil, Joe E. Brown,

Revel in all the color and rhythm of the spectacular singing and dancing numbers of a Broadway revue—Comedy "Parlor Pests" Pathe News

Matinee Tuesday at 3 P. M.
Children 15c, Adults 35c

Evening—Children 20c, Adults 40c

Wednesday, Dec. 11—

Special Double Feature

Glenn Tryon and Merna Kennedy

—in—

"BARNUM WAS RIGHT"

A great comedy of a young fellow who hires an old hotel, revives a legend that buried treasure is hidden there and enjoys a prosperous business. There is a load of humor with guests frantically digging underneath floors, outside on hotel grounds and elsewhere.

Janet Gaynor and Charles Morton

—in—

"CHRISTINA"

Matinee at 3



Where Good Plays and Good Friends Meet

The Westboro Players Club

presents

"The Late Christopher Bean"

TOWN HALL

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1937, 8:15 P. M.

Admission 50 Cents, Including Tax.

Admission 45c, Tax 5c; Total 50c

During the Depression the Strand gave away glassware on gala gift nights and on Wednesday matinee to patrons with enough coupons. There was also a lottery each week with cash prizes amounting to as much as \$150. A person who couldn't afford a movie ticket could still win if he were standing outside the theater when the winning number was announced.

The Strand continued to show double-features, newsreels, and cartoons every evening and at matinees on Wednesdays and Saturdays until it closed in 1961.

Theater in Westborough

Live theater and minstrel shows also figured prominently in Westborough's entertainment. The Kiwanis Club, organized in 1924, produced the spirited "Kiwanis Kapers" every Thanksgiving eve. The drama group of the Westborough Women's Club presented widely-acclaimed plays each year.

The Westborough Players Club began in 1936 as an outgrowth of the

drama committee of the Women's Club. On a shoestring budget the Players constructed sets and rehearsed their first play, "The Late Christopher Bean," for opening night on October 18, 1937. The 1938 hurricane destroyed the Players Club quarters on Summer Street. Since then the troupe has worked at a variety of locations including barns, churches, Lyman School, and the YWCA. In recent years the Westborough Players Club has concentrated on presenting a play for children in the fall and a full-scale musical in the spring.

The Red Barn Theater

Drama in Westborough reached new heights in 1938 when the barn at the Scott farm at the junction of Routes 9 and 30 was made into a theater. The July 2, 1938 *Chronotype* notes, "The barn at the 'Crossways' has been completely remodeled into a theater which will seat 300 persons. A terrace on the north side of the theater will afford a pleasant lounge. Exits, entrances, and dressing rooms of ample size and number are being built."

A professional troupe of ten actors and actresses from New York was selected by director Louise Galloway to perform in this summer repertory theater. For the next twenty years, Westborough residents were able to work as ushers and even bit-part players.

Mary Emily Libbey remembers working at the Red Barn. "During the late 1930s through the 1950s, the Red Barn had fine shows throughout the summer. In its heyday in the 1940s, actors like Wendell Corey, Murry Hamilton, and John Forsythe got their start there. Werner Klemperer (Colonel Klink of T.V.'s "Hogan's Heroes") met his first wife while performing at the Red Barn, and they were married at St. Stephen's in Westborough."

The performers worked hard in a constant round of performances and rehearsals. Most of the company lodged at the roadside cabins along Route 9 in Westborough.

During the 1950s Sid Sawyer and Shirley Matson Sawyer ran the Red Barn stock theater twenty-six weeks a year. The Sawyers continued as managers until a fire in 1958 closed the theater. The Red Barn was later reopened as a nightclub. In the 1980s the club was transformed into a Victorian restaurant, Tom Foolery's.

Hurricane of 1938

The ferocious hurricane of September 1938 left its mark on the town and on the memory of those who experienced its destruction. The storm was described in the September 23, 1938 *Chronotype*: "A hurricane of furious proportions which swept through New England, New York and



The Baptist and Congregational Churches after 1938 Hurricane.

Courtesy of Madeline Hulbert.

New Jersey on Wednesday, September 21, from the southeast, struck Westborough at about 4 o'clock and rapidly increased intensity, reaching a climax at 6:30 pm."

"The steeple of the Congregational Church fell upon the ridge pole, crushing the roof of the auditorium. The steeple of the Baptist church crashed into West Main Street and a large portion of the front of the church down as far as the doors was spread across the street as far as Memorial Cemetery where the iron fence was broken by the impact. . . Hundreds of trees were uprooted and filled the streets making it impossible for vehicles to pass. All wires were down and there was no electric light, telephone, fire alarm, or power service. The town was in complete darkness except for candlelight. Radios were also silent, and there was no sound except for the roar of the 110-m.p.h. gale of wind and the crashing of falling trees, slamming of blinds, and noise of falling debris."

Chimneys were torn off roofs, trees crashed onto houses, portions of the Odd Fellows Block on Summer Street and American Block on West Main Street fell into the street. Windows of store fronts were blown in and awnings ripped to shreds. At Westborough Airport a hangar was partially blown down and a private plane damaged. At MacGuffog's greenhouse on Route 9 and Brigham's Westboro Conservatories on Lyman Street hundreds of glass panes were destroyed. Farmers Roger Beaman on Maynard Street, F. J. Gribble on Lyman Street, and Ralph Franz on Oak Street lost chicken houses and many chickens.

Westborough orchards, laden with fruit ready to be picked, suffered extensive damage, especially the McTaggart farm on West Main Street, Baldwin farm on Morse Street, and Gilmore farm on Fay Mountain, where winds damaged and uprooted fruit trees.

That evening an alarm went out that the reservoir was in danger of

overflowing the banks where water had been pushed up by high winds. About thirty volunteers shouldered sandbags and walked up to Sandra Pond where they built a dike to avert the disaster.

Almost none of the roads in Westborough were passable the night of the storm. The street department, as well as 240 additional workers from the ranks of the High School, Lyman School, and the unemployed worked through to Sunday to clear the roads. Many residents were marooned out of town, since the highways were blocked by fallen trees, poles, wires, and debris. Memorial Hall was set up as a shelter for fifty residents who had been driven from their homes by the storm.

Many of the homes were without electricity until October 7, since the poles and wires had been so damaged that the town practically had to be rewired. The streetlights were not restored for several weeks. In all, over \$500,000 of damage was done, but fortunately no person was seriously injured.

The greatest loss to Westborough was the destruction of its trees. Since the hurricane had been preceded by heavy rains that saturated the ground, the earth around the trees' roots gave way easily. Thousands of trees were lost; at Lyman School alone 400 trees were destroyed and in the town cemeteries many shade trees were uprooted. Westborough's beautiful tree-lined streets, planted by proud citizens many years before, would never be the same.



SMALL TOWN LIFE

1940-1960

Town Profile

In 1940 Westborough was still a small town rimmed with farms. Its center was dominated by Bay State Abrasives, at that time the town's largest employer. The 1940 population was 6,463, a number that was to jump to 9,599 by 1960 in the postwar residential boom.

Before the war, the focus of community life was downtown Westborough with its many shops and restaurants. "Westborough was more balanced than many of the surrounding towns," Al Bowman notes. "A lot of people from Upton, Grafton, Northborough, Shrewsbury, and Hopkinton came to Westborough to shop since Westborough had the first A & P and First National." These two chain markets were located in the heart of town—the First National on the corner of Milk and West Main Streets (the Circle) and the A & P at 3 Summer Street (Karate/Miss Kim's).

In some of the small local markets—like Sam Halpern's Red & White, Harold Chamberlain's, or Art MacDonald's—the shopkeepers waited on their customers personally. Postmaster James Dunne remembers, "MacDonald's on East Main Street used to have a sign on the cash register saying, 'The First National Bank of Westborough had agreed not to sell whiskey, wine, or beer and in turn I've agreed to cash no checks.' MacDonald's also had a back room where guys could go to shoot the breeze."

Since most families had only one car, housewives living close by would



Views of downtown Westborough in the 1950's.
Photos by Rocco Paolini.

walk to town to do their grocery shopping a couple of times a week. Lifelong resident and teacher Charlotte Spinney comments, "If you got a big order at the First National, they'd put your name on the bag and put it in the window for your husband to stop by for it after work. We depended on downtown for just about all our needs—for haircuts, shoe repair, groceries, the bakery."

Wagner's Bakery continued to be a favorite Westborough institution. Jim Dunne says, "Everything was homemade at Wagner's in the bakery out back. Gus and his sons would be there at 3 or 4 in the morning. People would have a standing order for bread, and they'd pick it up in the morning when it was cool. Kids used to run down from school at noon for cookies or cake. They'd cut a piece of cake any size you'd want."

Women chose new outfits at the Berkely Shop in the Arcade Building (Regalia) or at Blankenship's (Golden's) and jewelry at J. Baron Mason's. Men found clothes at Herman's and E. A. Lord's. Noah Trank on South Street provided shoes for the entire family. The Chinese laundry on South Street, run by Chow Chin, continued to launder men's shirts as it had at the turn of the century. In the Arcade Building Starobin the tailor was ready to alter or repair apparel and the cobbler was happy to apply his skill as is done today in the same location.

The home handymen looked to Swan's Hardware, Fred's Hardware, and Western Auto for materials. A new car could be purchased at Charlie Waddell's Chrysler and Plymouth showroom on South Street or at Ganron Motors or Wheatley Ford on East Main.

More routine items such as newspapers, cigars, or candy were found in Bill Ford's News Room, which moved from the north to the south side of Main Street after World War II. Woolworth's, the Town Rexall, and Westboro Drug Store supplied other necessities.

To satisfy the town's appetite, the Merrie M beside the Town Hall, Bill Ford's downstairs lunchroom, and Courtney's Diner on Milk Street served

FREDERICK F. THOMPSON

HENRY W. L. FOX

F. E. THOMPSON & CO.

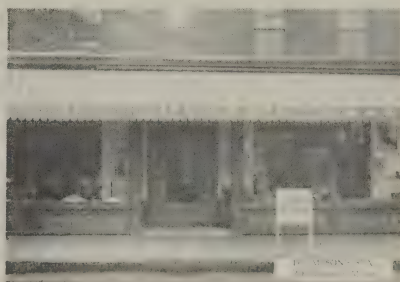
ICE CREAM AND CONFECTIONERY

CIGARS AND TOBACCO

Westboro, Mass.,

192

Ship via



Saturday Special

SEPT. 3rd

1 qt. Home Cooked Beans	25c
1 large Plum Brown Bread	10c
1 doz. Mity-Nice Doughnuts	25c

Regular Price 60c

Sale Price 45 Cents

These Doughnuts are made by our Automatic Machine and untouched by hands in the making.

Place your order Early to avoid dissapointment.

Wagners' Cream Bread

The Best for the Whole Family

10c PER LOAF

SOMETHING BRAN NEW
FIG MUFFINS 30c a doz.

DEVIL FOOD CAKE

Fresh Every Day 25c each

Hot Rolls Every day at 11.45 a. m.
15c per dozen

Save 10 bread wrappers and 70c and get a
JOY BALL FREE

Visit Our Remodeled Sanitary Bakery
Westboro Bakery

hearty fare. Ice cream and sodas were specialties at Thompson's Spa and Blois's Westboro Drug Store, both equipped with ice cream parlor round tables and wire chairs. The Puritan Restaurant, incongruously known as "The Greek's" and later Angelo's, occupied the corner of West Main and Summer Streets (Penny's Pizza). Route 9 was lined with restaurants as well, like the Checkerboard at Otis Street, Kaprelian's (LaCucina), Red Smith's Diner, CaraVilla (Chez Ami), Montrose Dairy (Honolulu), Langone's (Burger King), and Thompson's Redwood Steak House (Lyons Street and Route 9).

The 1881 Barn (Fox Lounge/Jade) and the Turnpike Club provided a nightclub atmosphere, and downtown two saloons stood side by side on South Street: the Golden Roosta (laundromat) and the A & A. "Before there was such a thing as Friday night fights on television," says Jim Dunne, "kids would stand outside the Golden Roosta on weekends, waiting for a fight to break out." The Central House, on the corner of South and Cottage Streets, is Westborough's oldest continuing tavern, operating under the same liquor license since the repeal of Prohibition. Built in 1874, the Central House still adheres to its original innkeeper's license and is required to furnish lodgings for travelers and their horses. A lot of activity went on not only in Westborough's saloons, but in the back rooms of MacDonald's, Noah Trank's, and the Puritan Restaurant.

During these years, a stroll around downtown was an event in itself. Charlotte Spinney recalls, "My father walked around town every Saturday paying his bills. He walked into Blois's drugstore and paid his phone bill, then stopped at the Massachusetts Electric Company (Spectacle Shop). The tax bills were paid at Noah Trank's shoe store. He paid the bills in cash and stopped to chat everywhere. It was a social occasion, a way of getting in touch with the community."

People also looked to the town to provide for their entertainment needs. The Strand Theater continued to show double features, cartoons, and newsreels on Summer Street until 1961. Ma Meigs ran a four-lane candlepin bowling alley on Milk Street (above the Piccadilly Pub) where boys earned two cents a string to set up the pins. Out on Route 9 the Speedway with its midget racing cars and the Westborough Airport on Otis Street satisfied the thrillseekers. In the summer residents enjoyed the Kiwanis Beach and bathhouse that opened at Lake Chauncy in 1937.

During the 1940s and 1950s theater, both professional and amateur, reached its heyday in Westborough. The Westborough Players produced two plays a year for the town's enjoyment in the Town Hall. In 1940 they were joined by a professional summer repertory company, the Town Hall Playhouse.

THE TOWN HALL PLAYHOUSE

WESTBORO, MASS.

TELEPHONE 497

Evenings at 8.30, Matinees Wednesday and Saturday at 2.30

All seats reserved. No Sunday Performances

Prices 55c, 85c and \$1.10, tax included. Matinees all seats 55c, tax included

Box office open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily except Sunday

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EDWARD EVERETT HORTON

IN

"SPRINGTIME FOR HENRY"

By Benn W. Levy

Staged by Henri Caubesens in Association with Dann Malloy

This professional troupe gave evening and matinee performances each week throughout the summer. The prices were \$.55 and \$.85 with the most expensive seat at \$1.10. Mary Emily Libbey, who has long been active in local theater, recalls, "I saw C. Aubrey Smith at the Town Hall Playhouse. The visiting stars would often stay on Parkman Street with Andy and Agnes Whelan. I remember the French star Fifi D'Orsay enjoying a cookout and wagon ride through Westborough at 2 a.m. one morning." The Town Hall Playhouse continued until 1942 when it was forced to disband because of the war.

During this period the Red Barn Theater on Route 9 (Tom Foolery's) was enjoying great success with its professional summer repertory company. The Red Barn continued to delight local audiences under the management of Sid and Shirley Matson Sawyer until 1958. In the 1950s Robert Daggett also operated a playhouse near the junction of Route 495 and Route 9; this property was later sold as the site of the Duplicon Company.

Industrial Development

"Of all the towns around here," says Al Bowman, "Westborough had the best mix of industry. We had several different factories around town like the machine shops, J. S. Mason, Kenworthy's, and the underwear factory." Those townspeople not working on farms were employed in the smaller factories or at Bay State Abrasives. Approximately 600 workers lost their jobs when a tremendous 1947 fire destroyed the old Westboro Hat company on Phillips Street and the adjacent Gould & Walker factory of Milk Street, where the Westboro Underwear and Rasmussen Shoe factories were located (see Fire Department, Chapter 9).

After the fire VeeArc was constructed on the burned out site on Milk Street. Other industries that located in Westborough during the 1950s were Alden Electronics, Carlstrom Pressed Metal, Duplicon Metal Stampings, and Chase Paper.

The Boston and Albany Railroad and Railway Express supplied jobs for other Westborough residents as well as providing daily commuter service to Boston and Worcester. Many others found work as teachers, attendants, nurses, farmers, or craftsmen at Lyman School or at Westborough State Hospital, where over 600 were employed in the 1950s.

Farms dominated Westborough beyond the town center. In 1950 there were still thirty dairies in town. Five years earlier cattle auctions by cattle dealers Emory Harvey and Edward Aronson livened the evenings, and the stockyards on Brigham Street were kept full. Besides cattle, Westborough during these years had six poultry farms and two pig farms. Orchards dotted the landscape with apple and peach trees. At this time there were nine local orchards where Westborough residents could earn a little pocket money picking fruit in the fall. Although Route 9 had begun to be built up, large farms still softened the landscape along the highway. In fifteen years they'd be a memory.

Residential Growth

Westborough before World War II was a secure small town where both people and events were familiar and predictable. Charlotte Spinney comments, "Westborough was a solid middle class community without extremes of wealth. There were no locks on the doors, and everyone was welcome in each other's home. The town was so small that you knew everybody, especially since most of the people worked in Westborough. Very few mothers worked outside the home, and the children and fathers came home for dinner at noon."

"After World War II, things all changed," says Al Bowman. "Some who left never came back. They had seen different things and had new ideas."

Those veterans who did return needed housing — between 1950 and 1960 there were 744 houses built in Westborough. The first housing development in town was Maple Acres, a group of prefabricated steel modular houses built in 1951 on Steven and Shepherd Roads. This was followed by Chauncy Acres across from Lake Chauncy and by Gregory O'Neil's subdivision on O'Neil Drive and Harvey Lane in 1953. From 1952 until 1967 Dodd and Tyler built homes in the McTaggart orchard along West Main Street. Robin Road was constructed on the Concaugh farm, and Mill Road was developed, particularly for Bay State families.

Westborough's population, which had remained stable for so many years, grew dramatically. The population in 1945 was 6,655; in 1950 it grew to 7,378; and in 1955 it reached 8,130. Westborough was on the move.

The War Years

The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 stunned Westborough as well as the rest of the country. The *Chronotype* reported that week "Air Raid Scare on Tuesday Caught Town Entirely Unprepared," so Westborough rallied quickly to meet the demands of war. Within a month a local Civilian Defense Program had been established. The Civilian Defense headquarters and armory were set up in the Keating Building on East Main Street with a State Guard unit of fifty men. Over 100 residents volunteered to serve as air raid wardens and deputies and were each assigned districts in town.

Procedures during air raid drills were thoroughly explained in the local paper; even the insignia of enemy planes were printed for those searching the skies. Air raid drills and blackouts began to be held regularly in March 1942. Westborough's actions during one of these first drills on March 12, 1942 were described in the next day's *Chronotype*: "Street lights were turned off by the throwing of switches by the air raid wardens in the several districts. Night lights in stores were turned off and every home was darkened, either by putting out the lights or by drawing blackout curtains."

"All district air wardens were at their posts and patrolled the streets in their districts to make sure that all lights had been extinguished. Auxiliary and regular police were also on duty, and the firemen and auxiliary firemen manned the firefighting apparatus. All members of the medical unit — doctors, nurses, and first aid workers reported at the High School, and members of the American Legion, who are serving as armed police, reported to the Town Hall. Traffic was at a standstill, all cars drawn to the curb with lights out."

As the War progressed, the air raid procedures became more

sophisticated. Signals on the fire station alarm and factory whistles indicated a "blue" alert for the approach of enemy planes and a "red" alert for an actual attack. Each home was to have a designated refuge room in which to take cover during the raids.

The Civilian Defense Committee not only explained air raid procedures to the public, but tried to safeguard Westborough homes as well. The January 2, 1942 *Chronotype* explained this effort by the Committee: "The work of distribution (of sand) began today and will be continued until every home has four to five pails of sand with which to sprinkle incendiary bombs that are dropped in Westborough."

Almost as soon as the Civilian Defense Committee was established, the Ration Board was appointed and went into effect. In January 1942 the first item to be rationed in town was tires. Soon sugar was added to the list, followed by gasoline, fuel oil, oil stoves, canned fruit and vegetables, meats, coffee, fats, and shoes. Ration books were issued to each family, filled with stamps to be redeemed at local stores. Westborough teachers were called to the High School to issue ration books to each family in town.

The *Chronotype* called attention to the local merchants' plight in an editorial on January 29, 1943: "There seems to be no limit to the civilian strategy which is being practiced on the home front. A storekeeper is besieged at all places and the most unexpected times by wily housewives who seek to stake a claim upon some commodity of which the supply is short. It is not alone at his place of business that he is subject to attack from irate housewives; they also go to his home, hail him on the street and even in church, with appeals for butter, etc."

Gasoline was rationed by the amount of travel required of each motorist. The most common class of motorists was the A class; the clergy and doctors were designated the X class. Commuters employed out of town and engaged in war contract work were given first priority and greater quantities in their B3 class. Anyone who wished to receive more gasoline, or any rationed item, could appeal to the three-member Ration Board, whose office was in the lower floor of Town Hall.

Other war-related committees in Westborough were the Salvage Committee, the Evacuation Committee, the Farm War Council, and the Westborough Service Fund Committee. The Salvage Committee collected scrap metal from residents, particularly in the form of washed and flattened tin cans. Schoolchildren collected metal from home, and an area was fenced off on the Rotary to hold the scrap metal. In 1942, for instance, 170 tons of scrap metal were collected, which netted \$1,258. The money was donated to the Westborough Service Fund Committee, whose job it was to send letters and gifts to Westborough citizens serving in the armed



Scrap metal display at Westborough Rotary.

Courtesy of Carolyn Sagro.

forces. The Evacuation Committee organized a convoy of fifty volunteer drivers and automobiles to transport, if necessary, residents out of Westborough of people from evacuated coastal areas into town.

The Farm War Council urged residents to grow "victory gardens," for it stated that "Patriotism does demand that all food shall be conserved. Food that cannot be used at once should be preserved. It is recommended that each family can at least 75 pints of vegetables and 25 pints of fruit per person." The February 28, 1943 *Chronotype* added, "The crops recommended for the less experienced are tomatoes, snap beans, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, and greens. In cases where a family wishes to have a garden and has not the land, several offers of good land have already been made."

The labor shortage was felt sharply in Westborough factories, farms, and orchards. Arrangements were made with the school system to shift certain classes to the morning to allow high school boys to work afternoons on local farms. In the factories and stores Westborough women tackled work formerly assigned to men. Many of the local industries — Bay State Abrasives, Tufts Machinery, Marcus Mason, and Kenworthy's — were involved in war contract work.

Westborough citizens were urged to invest in war bonds, and the town itself bought bonds with municipal funds. Young men signed up for the armed forces at age seventeen, leaving for battle before completing their senior year in high school.

Eighteen Westborough servicemen were killed fighting for their coun-



Scrap metal drive parade.
Courtesy of Carolyn Sagro.

try in World War II. They, like their fallen comrades from other wars, are commemorated by the war memorials at the Rotary, before the Forbes Building, and in Memorial Hall in the Town Hall. The local American Legion Post #163 added the name Parker to its title to remember Ray and



Dedication of War Honor Roll at Forbes Building.
Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

Reed Parker, brothers who were killed in the North Atlantic when their ship, the U.S.S. Jacob Jones, was torpedoed by German submarine on February 28, 1942.

After four years of sacrifice and anxiety, Westborough residents greeted the end of the war in 1945 with jubilation. The *Chronotype* reported, "Immediately upon the radio announcement which came at 7 p.m. Tuesday evening, August 14 (1945), residents of Westborough began to celebrate the end of the war by ringing church bells, blowing the factory whistles and rushing about in automobiles with horns tooting out the signal of victory (...). Crowds quickly congregated in the Square where the center of celebration seemed to be. Hundreds of automobiles with tin cans and other noisemakers dragging behind and filled with youngsters singing and shouting, raced through the streets. A band of musicians mounted on a truck drove up and down the streets playing, 'Hail, Hail the Gang's All Here.' It halted in the Square, and teenaged celebrants staged a block dance."

One era had ended, and Westborough's boom in development was about to begin.

Admiral Louis Emil Denfeld, Chief of Naval Operations

Louis Emil Denfeld, a Westborough native and longtime resident, held the highest office in the United States Navy when President Truman appointed him Chief of Naval Operations, Joint Chiefs of Staff, in December 1947. This appointment culminated a long and illustrious naval career. It is said that Louis Denfeld "slashed more red tape than the Navy could measure." He is recognized as having been the major architect of the U. S. Navy during World War II when he expanded the American Navy to fighting strength as Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel.

Louis Denfeld was born on April 13, 1891 on Fay Street in Westborough. He attended Westborough grammar schools and formed a lifelong admiration for his sixth grade teacher, Annie Fales. After his father died, Louis spent his high school years in Minnesota living with an uncle. He entered Annapolis in 1908 and graduated in the class of 1912. Two years later he served in the Mexican campaign and later in the second Nicaraguan campaign.

In 1915 Denfeld returned to Westborough to marry his childhood sweetheart, Rachel Metcalf, in the Evangelical Congregational Church. From then on, the Denfelds traveled the world over but maintained close ties to Westborough. They returned to the small New England town at least once a year, usually staying with Mrs. Denfeld's parents at 9 Charles Street.



**Admiral Louis Denfeld
(1891-1972).**

*Courtesy of
Westborough Anniversary Committee*

During World War I Denfeld saw action in the Atlantic on destroyers on anti-submarine patrol. When attached to the U.S.S. Ammen in Ireland, he escorted troop transports to France. After the war Denfeld continued his naval career serving on destroyers and submarines.

By 1941 Denfeld had commanded the Grand Banks Patrol and the Gulf Patrol. He was named Chief of Staff of the U. S. Atlantic Fleet, Task Force, and in that position Denfeld was awarded the Legion of Merit in London for "his skill and diplomacy in obtaining wholehearted co-operation of the Allied Forces and his outstanding ability and untiring efforts in organizing and administrating the task force." At this time Louis Denfeld negotiated with the British on the location of potential American Navy bases in the British Isles. He then persuaded President Franklin Roosevelt to earmark \$50 million for establishment of those bases.

From 1942 to 1945 Admiral Denfeld served as Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, and as such he supervised the expansion of the Navy to full fighting force. For this work he received the Distinguished Service Medal. In 1945 Denfeld was commander of Battleship Division 9, which supported the attack on Okinawa. In this capacity he supervised the refinement of radar as an effective defense weapon.

Ordered to Washington, D. C. at the end of the war, Admiral Denfeld was confirmed by the Senate to be Chief of Naval Personnel. It was his responsibility to direct the demobilization of the world's largest navy and



Birthplace of Admiral Denfeld, 5 Fay St., c. 1890.

Photo by Paula Skog.

set the goals for a peacetime navy. In February 1947 Denfeld was made Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific and then first High Commissioner of the Pacific Islands with headquarters at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

In December 1947 President Harry Truman appointed Louis Denfeld Chief of Naval Operations. During his tenure Admiral Denfeld earned praise for greatly improving the lot of the enlisted man in the U. S. Navy through pay raises, greater privileges, broader training, and increased opportunity to become officers. Denfeld also insisted that the Navy recruit half of its officers from civilian colleges, rather than from Annapolis.

Admiral Denfeld disagreed with the President about the wisdom in forming a Defense Department and was vocal about his reservations. For his views, the Admiral was dismissed from his position; the nation was split over this treatment of Denfeld. Admiral Denfeld was quoted as saying, "For thirty years I've been sticking to my guns. If they want to kick me out, I'm still sticking to my guns."

Louis Denfeld retired from public life and was hired as a consultant to Sun Oil. He and Mrs. Denfeld returned to Westborough in 1951 and settled in the house on 9 Charles Street. Here they lived graciously, entertaining their many friends and hosting an annual Open House on New Year's Day.

Louis Emil Denfeld died on March 30, 1972 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Rachel Denfeld lived at 9 Charles Street until her death in 1978. In 1980 the Denfeld house was transformed into the home of Congregation B'nai Shalom.

Westborough Speedway

After World War II activity increased along Route 9, and one of the biggest attractions was the Westborough Sports Stadium, which opened



Westborough Speedway, est. 1947.

Photo by Paula Skog.

on August 5, 1947. The Speedway, as it is currently known, was built by five World War II veterans: Roland and Leo Turgeon, Norman MacDonald, Joseph Hennebry from Framingham, and Richard Trum from Natick. They formed the Allied Sports Association and with \$100,000 initial investment built the quarter-mile circular track and stadium on thirty-five acres.

The stadium was used first for midget auto racing every Tuesday night, and according to the promotional ads, it was the "newest, finest midget auto racing track featuring your favorites of the speedy Bay State Circuit." Opening night drew a crowd of 9,255. Inaugural ceremonies included a motorcade parade around the track with the Selectmen, Chief of Police, and Fire Chief, as well as fire trucks and ambulance.

The August 8, 1947 *Chronotype* described the event: "Every grandstand was filled to capacity, and many stood through the evening. Floodlights and amplifiers have been erected over the acres, which have been transformed in the last few months into a beautiful stadium with a quarter-mile asphalt race track enclosing a green lawn, and surrounded by high wire fencing. . . Probably never in the history of Westborough have so many people been within the town limits as there were on Tuesday night. Traffic on the turnpike was congested to such an extent that the hundreds of local and state police had trouble keeping it moving. Parking space at the stadium was completely filled, and many cars were parked in the immediate neighborhood."

The Westborough Speedway has retained its popularity through a series of owners. Its races in the 1970s and 1980s included those for modifieds: cars with four-cylinder engines that can reach 80 m.p.h. and complete a lap in thirteen seconds. Other races feature street stock cars and spectator races where members of the audience race their own cars. Demolition derbies are a popular favorite, when the racetrack is filled with cars careening into each other in reverse amid thick clouds of dust and smoke. The Coastal Racing Association has operated the races for many years and expects crowds of 1,500 and 2,000 on a Saturday night.

The Speedway in the 1980s has been the site of a rock concert, wrestling match, a rodeo, and seasonal flea markets as well as car races. Sold at auction many times, the Speedway owners hope to develop this prime industrial land in the future.

The Tornado

In a few horrifying, earth-wrenching moments on June 9, 1953, five people were killed; 321 buildings damaged; 4,000 trees lost and over 100 people injured as a tornado with 300 m.p.h. winds ripped a half-mile swath through Westborough. Without warning the storm entered town near the Shrewsbury line at Fisher Street, traveled across West Main Street at O'Neil Drive to Ruggles, Baxter, and South Streets, then through Cedar Swamp to Flanders Road before dissipating in Fayville.

Homes were picked up and dashed against the ground like so much kindling, buildings twisted on their foundations, trucks lifted bodily, and roofs ripped off. The devastation was far-reaching in almost a third of the town, and Westborough was proclaimed a disaster area before nightfall. Over 200 families were affected; thirty-two homes were completely destroyed and another forty-two were badly damaged. More than sixty farm buildings were destroyed.

Although the loss in personal property and real estate was great—estimated at nearly \$5 million—the loss in human life was a greater shock. Four people were killed when the house and farm buildings at the Aronson farm at 88 West Main Street were leveled. This had been the site of the Indian kidnapping of the Rice boys, the Victorian mansion of Christopher Whitney, and is now the location of Westborough High School. That fateful afternoon three of the Aronson family—Charles, Sadie (Mrs. Edward) and her fourteen-year-old daughter Sheila—were killed when the tornado struck their home. Also killed on the Aronson grounds was Robert Bailey, an itinerant farm worker who had arrived to work in Westborough only about a week before.

Priscilla Peirce Miller, a lifelong resident of Westborough who still lives



Aronson property following the 1953 tornado.

Courtesy of Priscilla Miller.

in her childhood home across from the former Aronson property, vividly remembers the fury of the storm: "There were a couple of warnings—the sky was extremely black, it got absolutely dead calm, and the birds stopped singing. We could tell there was a thunderstorm coming so we closed all the windows in the back of the house."

"Then bang! The thing hit. It started to pour in the front windows and I ran upstairs to close the windows. When I closed the window in my bedroom, I caused the whole side of the house to go out because—I learned later—I changed the air pressure. I was thrown across the room, then I ran downstairs. My sister Nancy tried to go down cellar, my sister Mary tried to run into a closet, but the bricks from the chimney were falling down. The noise from the tornado was so loud and horrible—like a roar of a train. My mother and father were yelling, but they couldn't be heard over the noise. Then the whole house began to weave and sway in front of our eyes."

"Then suddenly it was over and it was quiet. We couldn't see out the windows because they were covered with mud. That's when we heard this man crying and crying. We girls opened the door. It was one of the hired men from Aronson's and he was crying, 'They're all dead. They're all dead. I came from Oklahoma to get away from these. They're all dead.' When we looked across the street, everything was gone, flattened. There was just the hissing noise of broken gas lines. Some of the neighbors said they



The devastation along South St.

Courtesy of Worcester Telegram and Gazette.

saw the Aronson house lifted thirty feet into the air, then explode, and fall back down."

The June 12, 1953 *Chronotype* reported, "Ambulances were summoned in person when all telephone and electric service was disrupted and huge trees fell across power lines. Until these lines could be shut off, countless broken wires lay smoking and sizzling in the streets. Ambulances had to try many routes before being able to reach the victims."

"At our house," adds Priscilla Miller, "our 1953 Ford, which had been in the garage, was blown down the driveway like someone had backed it out perfectly. But the tin garage was flattened." The Peirces also had a gaping hole in their roof. A big maple had been uprooted — one branch came through the living room window, one was on the dining room table, and another branch was in the upstairs bathtub. Later the side section of the house had to be chained in place to hold the building together.

Many of the newly constructed homes on O'Neil Drive and Mill Street were damaged by the winds, and the backs of homes, garages, and porches on the south side of Main Street were wrecked. The twisting winds crossed over to Baxter and Beach Streets, but they caused the most devasta-

tion on South Street where six homes were ruined beyond repair. One of the most harrowing experiences was that of the Bob Harvey family, whose fifteen-room home at 91 South Street was ripped off its foundation while they were still inside.

Jane Harvey recalls, "I was giving my three-month-old baby and three little boys dinner about 5:00 p.m. Bob was across the street at the cattle barn. The wind began to blow and it got dark—that was all the warning we had. I saw one of the big trees along the side of our house uprooted by the wind and going down the driveway. That alarmed me since I knew if one of those trees fell on the house, we'd be hurt. Storms don't usually bother me, but the wind was different and it was very dark. I reacted in a different way; I decided we should go down cellar."

"The boys went down the cellar stairs ahead of me, but they said it was dark, so I sent the eldest back for a flashlight, if you can imagine. When he came back with the light we had barely got to the bottom of the cellar stairs when the whole house flew off. We had no time to think. Over our heads was an enormous freezer, a rolltop desk, two soapstone tubs, and an iron radiator, but nothing came down. The cellar stairs fell in, but everything else was blown into the field. The house was picked up just like in 'The Wizard of Oz.' And my friends across town didn't know a thing had happened."

"My husband Bob tried to close the barn doors when the wind was blow-



The Emory Harvey Home, South St.

Courtesy of Bud Witherell.

ing so hard, but he couldn't. The wind was so strong he couldn't walk, so he hung onto the iron pipe that was cemented into the steps of the milk house to make a railing. He stayed there watching things blow around his head and saw the barn blow down. Some of the twenty cattle were hurt, but they were protected somewhat by the metal stanchions."

"There was debris from everywhere. Bob made it up to his parents' house, then looked across the street and saw his house was gone. He had no idea what he would find when he came across the road. But he found us safe in the cellar. He jumped down and tried to put his arms all around everyone at once."

"The first thing to do was to take care of people injured and hurt. Then we had to find somebody to take and milk our cows. Our house, garage, barn, chicken houses, and Bob's parents' house and barn were all gone. But our lives were saved which to us was a miracle."

The tornado then jumped across Cedar Swamp to Flanders Road where it killed Mrs. Harriette Cahill, injured her family, and demolished several barns.

For days after the tornado South Street was a scene of complete devastation. Cars, pianos, baby carriages, trees, roof slates, and furniture were all strewn over the fields and road. The week after the tornado, the sun shone relentlessly on the volunteers sifting through the debris, the shattered trees offering no protection.

While the victims were still dazed by the destruction, friends and neighbors rushed to their aid with shelter, food, and clothing. Local police, firemen, civil defense workers, and volunteers worked through the night to clear the roads of fallen trees. The wail of the chain saws mingled with the ambulance siren all over town.

Service workers labored that night to restore some of the 1,016 telephones out of order, and in five days they replaced 200 poles and strung 31,476 feet of cable. With all the telephones out, residents in some parts of town had no idea of the extent of the damage. Utility workers worked incessantly until most of the street lighting and home electrical service were repaired.

The National Guard patrolled around the ruined homes and scattered belongings along South Street and West Main Street. Traffic, impeded by broken limbs, uprooted trees, and hanging wires, was rerouted away from South Street for several days. The Guard also maintained tight control of traffic entering Westborough to discourage sightseers. All Westborough residents who wished to drive in town the days following the tornado were required to display special resident passes on their windshields. Out-of-town motorists had to show good reason for travel into

Westborough before they were issued a special permit to cross the town's boundaries.

School was canceled until the following Monday, and the High School graduation had to be rescheduled. High school students, as well as many other volunteers, worked side by side to clear the rubble from the streets. Hundreds of workmen and trucks were employed for six days to clear the streets of fallen trees.



Canteen workers at the Forbes School.

Courtesy of Bud Witherell.

The local Red Cross under the direction of Orville "Bud" Witherell established a canteen to serve the tornado victims, utility workers, police, firemen, Guardsmen, and volunteers. This canteen, set up in the Forbes High School cafeteria, served more than 4,000 meals from June 9 to June 16. Besides lunch and dinner, canteen workers supplied coffee, doughnuts, and sandwiches twice a day to clean-up crews in outlying areas. In six-and-a-half days the canteen volunteers — many of them Girl Scouts — served over 4,500 people. Much of the food was donated by townspeople, particularly homebaked cookies and pies along with fresh eggs and farm produce.

All the families left homeless were provided shelter by friends or family, so no public shelter was necessary. Caring for the livestock was another dilemma. At the time Bud Witherell noted, "A big problem at the beginning was getting farm livestock under cover for protection from the weather. We secured canvas tents for this . . . We had 150 Boy Scouts come

into town to scour farm areas. We organized them into units of ten to thoroughly canvass fields, picking up nails and sharp pieces of board. Otherwise farmers would have been forced to burn their hay after cutting it for fear one of their cows might swallow a nail in with her food."

Farmers banded together to offer help to their comrades whose barns had been destroyed. Shelter was found for the cattle, and the men worked cooperatively to milk the herds since the electric milking machines were useless. Once the rubble had been cleared away, hay was cut by the farmers who still had usable farm machinery.

In this time of crisis Westborough sprang into action to help its own. Not only friends, but strangers, stopped to help tornado victims sift through the debris for some item that could be salvaged to help start their new lives.

Of the 200 families affected, about 25% had no wind insurance. The National Red Cross, after reviewing applications, granted \$35,000 for reconstruction to forty families. Most of the funds were earmarked for repairs, rebuilding, and furnishings. The aid was given on the basis of need; those with the financial ability to help themselves were expected to do so. New articles were to be purchased from local merchants to stimulate business in town.

Many of the homes were damaged so severely that they had to be torn down and rebuilt. By that autumn, many of these homes had been replaced. The replacement of the 4,200 destroyed shade trees was another matter, however.

A Westborough Tree Committee was established to collect funds from private donations to finance a tree planting program. Before the ravages of the tornado, the 1938 Hurricane, and blight, Westborough had been famous in the region for the canopy of trees shading its streets. The tornado left jagged splinters and gaping holes in the town's landscape. Over the next year the Tree Program collected \$5,128 through various public appeals and with that money 200 shade trees were planted. Those contributing were listed in a "tree book," but the streets of Westborough have yet to regain their shaded splendor.

Hurricane Dianne

The forces of nature wreaked havoc on Westborough in the early 1950s. After the 1953 tornado, Hurricanes Edna and Carol in the fall of 1954 caused \$8,348 in repair work. Then came Hurricane Dianne on August 19, 1955. This storm flooded Westborough with sixteen inches of rain, washing out streets and bridges. The main damage occurred early in the morning at the town reservoir where the sluiceway feeding water from

the larger Sandra Pond to the lower basin gave way. This breakthrough caused the basin to overflow onto Upton Road near the pumphouse.

An emergency call for help went out to the town workers, firemen, police, civil defense, and High School. Within twenty minutes the construction crew of Groves, Lunden, and Cox, which was working nearby on the Massachusetts Turnpike, came to the rescue as well.

"Town escapes disaster at reservoir by 15 minutes as 16 inches of rain falls" proclaimed the August 26 headline of the *Chronotype*. The article reported, "There was dangerous undermining of the reservoir wall at the pumphouse according to (Ray) Welsh, and it was here that Groves, Lunden, and Cox dumped 800 cubic yards of ledge rock in eight hours, pushing it into place with big dozers. The rock was used to break up large streams overflowing the lower basin and thus reduce their power and to build diversion channels around the pumphouse. At one time, officials said, the lower reservoir was within fifteen minutes to one-half hour of collapse. Had that occurred, it was declared, the sudden reduction of pressure against the dike separating the upper lake might have caused its collapse, sending a wall of water perhaps 14 feet high down on the town."

Throughout the day volunteers worked unceasingly at the backbreaking job of sandbagging the reservoir, standing knee-deep in water. Their efforts buttressed the dike and diverted the overflow into smaller channels to bypass the pumphouse. However, the overflow carved a path across Upton Road through meadows to the Piccadilly mill pond, then caused a major washout on Route 135. In other parts of town roads were washed out by the storm, particularly Arch, Ruggles, and Maynard Streets, as well as the Route 9 underpasses at Routes 9 and 135.

Many Westborough residents found their cellars flooded. The downtown blocks in Westborough Square had more than seventeen inches of water in their basements. The Highway Department spent weeks pumping out these establishments. Hurricane Dianne knocked out telephone service to 315 families for several days. Roads were impassable for two days, and bus transportation was suspended. Work on the toll road had to be delayed several weeks since the saturated soil could not be compacted.

Once again natural disaster brought the community together. The local merchants ran an ad in the Westborough paper that read, "Thanks to the men who saved our reservoir—We feel that public acknowledgement should be made of the heroic battle put up on Friday by the water and highway department, the police and firemen, civil defense workers, auxiliary police and fire departments, Lyman School boys, and just plain volunteers who worked without rest or thought of gain until the reser-

THANKS!



EXCLUSIVE CHRONOTYPE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH of the breaks in the Lower Basin of the Westboro Reservoir last Friday. Channels show where volunteer workers diverted water from two breaks (Arrows) to bypass Pump House. Water gushed a route across Upton Road in background where it fell across meadows to Route 135, causing major washout.

TO THE MEN WHO SAVED OUR RESERVOIR

From the 8/26/1955 Westborough Chronotype.

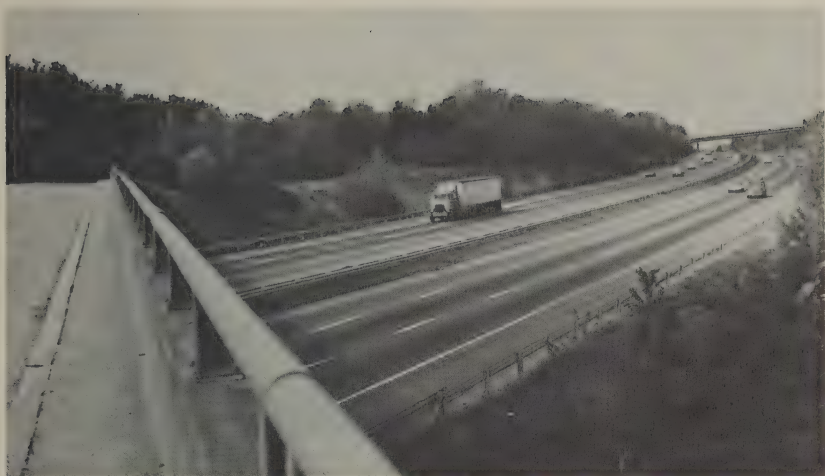
Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

voir was safe from collapse and the town from an unimaginable disaster. You have earned the respect and gratitude of the citizens and merchants of Westboro. And a special note of thanks to Groves, Lunden, and Cox of Minneapolis and their workers—men from the South and West who pitched in shoulder to shoulder with local residents and without whose skill and spirit tragedy could not have been avoided. Westboro salutes you."

The Massachusetts Turnpike: I-90

The idea of building a toll road across Massachusetts in 1953 was seen as a sound proposal, but the specific route of this toll road was hotly contested, especially in Westborough. The plans for the proposed route were not revealed until a few weeks before public hearings about the toll road. Westborough citizens' reaction was vehement.

According to the first plan, the Massachusetts Turnpike would pass through Cedar Swamp, cross Hopkinton Road, run over Denny, Chestnut, Eli Whitney, and Jasper Streets to the Grafton line. This path partially paralleled that taken by the tornado in June of that year and passed only one-quarter of a mile from the town business center. Reports on



The Massachusetts Turnpike from Upton Rd. to Spring Rd.

Photo by Paula Skog.

Westborough's reaction in the *Boston Globe* on September 3, 1953 stated, "Residents here are aroused enough about the cross-state toll highway going through town, but they are adamant about it taking the same path the June 9 tornado took . . . The gist of the feeling: Tornado-struck Westboro home owners suffered enough from the tornado without losing further because of the highway."

A local Protest Committee was formed including members of the Planning Board, Selectmen, and concerned citizens. More than 150 townspeople attended a meeting to voice their opposition to the route. The Westborough residents feared that the toll road would bisect important residential property that was yet to be developed as well as run through a heavily settled section. They proposed that the Massachusetts Turnpike swing south, either avoiding the town altogether or at least to the south of the town reservoir.

To the residents' dismay, the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority was reported to take the position that no major changes would be considered at the September 16 public hearing for the people of Central Massachusetts. Orville Witherell, member of the Planning Board and Protest Committee, sent the following telegram to Governor Christian Herter on September 15: "Benjamin Grout of the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority has announced, and chairman William Callahan confirmed, that no proposals for major changes will be discussed or considered at the public hearing September 16 in Worcester Court House. Citizens of Westboro appeal to

your Excellency to impose any restraining orders possible to postpone this hearing until complete investigations have been made by you and the constitutional right of the citizen to speak at this public hearing without restraint by the Authority be assured."

This telegram and Governor Herter's response requesting that individuals at the hearing be "given full latitude of expression regarding any phase of the toll road" were printed in the newspapers and received widespread attention. Westborough representatives presented the proposed route south of Sandra Reservoir at the hearing and voiced their reservations about the original plan.

The result of the Westborough protest was the adoption of the alternate plan by the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. The Westborough re-routing is believed to be the only major change made in the cross-state route.

A later report in the *Chronotype* by William Libbey, Chairman of the Planning Board and Protest Committee, added, "Last week a series of preliminary engineer's drawings of the Westborough area route of the proposed new Toll Road was posted in the lower Town Hall by the Planning Board. . . This official routing apparently brings a successful conclusion to efforts to move the Toll Route from the Denny Street area, as first announced, to the south side of the Reservoir, and out of town. Obviously, we were not completely successful in the latter aim, but the present route is, in large part, in Hopkinton, Upton and Grafton, rather than all in Westborough. The re-routing is quite painful to several orchardists in the Spring Road area. . . An intensive series of meetings, hearings, and conferences with the Toll Authority finally resulted in this change which we believe to be of immense benefit to the Town as a whole."

The Massachusetts Turnpike, I-90, or "The Pike", as it is known, was built across the southern section of Westborough from 1955 to 1956, and the entire thoroughfare was opened to Boston in 1964. The toll road is 123 miles long and cost over \$200 million to build. Its course through Westborough, so hotly disputed at the time, has been a major factor in attracting industry to the town in the 1980s.



BOOM TOWN OF 495 1960 AND BEYOND

1960-1980 Town Profile

Westborough burst forth with new industrial and residential growth in the 1960s. The image of the quiet town with a careful balance of agriculture and industry faded as one by one farmers sold their land off to developers. In place of rye and corn, high technology parks and corporate headquarters sprouted on the rural Flanders Road and Otis Street, located at the east and west borders of town.

Route 9 has also changed dramatically since the early 1960s. Before Massachusetts Electric broke ground on Route 9 in 1964, guest cabins, farms, and restaurants lined the highway. Rows of carnations in the MacGuffog and Brigham greenhouses dominated the stretch near Lyman Street. Thompson's Steak House and the Eli Whitney House (Honolulu) catered to family dining as did the Checkerboard Restaurant beyond the Speedway.

The passenger train service had been discontinued in 1960, but the Carlstrom Bus Lines served the town's mass transportation needs. People could get a bus to Milford, Grafton, or Worcester at Johnson's bus depot on East Main Street; those working at the Upton hat shop could also get a bus to Upton. If residents wanted to go to Boston, they took the B & W bus out on Route 9 that stopped at Langone's and Otis Street.

Much of the industrial activity shifted from the town's center to the

town's fringes. Shopping centers appeared near the highways to entice not only Westborough residents but the passing motorists. Westborough's downtown shifted gradually from being the main retail center to become the locale for banks, insurance, and medical buildings. Older homes along East Main Street have been transformed into boutiques and offices for real estate, doctors, lawyers, and dentists.

Shopping Centers

Large shopping plazas were introduced to Westborough in the early 1970s. In 1971 Julio's Market opened on Lyman Street and West Meadow Plaza on Milk Street, both with easy access to Route 9. Bradlees, Stop and Shop, and the Giant Store formed the nucleus of West Meadow Plaza, and by 1977 the plaza had expanded to two additional buildings housing many stores.

Julio's Shopping Center continued to grow as well. A drug store and liquor store were added in 1974, and between 1977 and 1981 office buildings, a movie theater, restaurants, and retail stores were constructed on the thirty-five-acre site. By 1984 over thirty-two retail stores had located in the shopping center—with close to 230,000 square feet of space developed and one more building phase on the drawing boards.

Residential Growth

The industrial boom brought on by the construction of the state and



West Meadow Plaza, at Route 9 and Route 135.

Courtesy of Gen. William Porter.



Julio's Plaza.
Photo by Paula Skog.



First Fountainhead Apartment Building on Rt. 9.
Photo by Rocco Paolini.

federal highways stretching across town made Westborough a desirable residential and business address. More and more people were drawn within the borders to work and stayed to buy homes, raise families and settle in. In 1960 the town's population was 9,599; in 1970 it had jumped to 12,594; and in 1980 it reached 13,619.

Many of the new residents were interested in living in efficiency apartments rather than one-family homes. From 1965 to 1970 six apartment buildings appeared on the scene: Heritage Hall and Yarmouth Hall on Willow Street (1966-1968), Brook Village West (now Park Village) in 1969, and near Route 9, Fountainhead, Carleton Arms, and Windsor Ridge in 1970. Apartment houses proliferated within the apartment-zoned section of town—in 1960 there were 169 apartments in structures of five or more units; in 1980 there were 1,667 such units. Construction continues on condominiums in Treetop Park off Park Street and is planned for the Willows, a 200-apartment complex for the elderly on East Main Street.

Housing developments of one-family homes multiplied as well, spreading over former apple orchards and dairy pastures. Homes were built along country roads in the four corners of Westborough—on Upton Road, Haskell Street, Arch Street, and Brady Road.

Medical Facilities

To care for the health needs of a burgeoning population, three medical centers have located in Westborough since 1977. The Fallon Medical Center at 95 East Main Street opened in 1977 and operates with a staff of twelve physicians. In 1980 the Southboro Medical Group opened its Westborough office at 41 South Street with four pediatricians. The West Meadow Walk-in Medical Center on Route 9 opened in 1981. Its staff of seven includes a dentist, optometrist, psychologist, and physical therapist. A medical building for the Westboro Associates, a group of seven doctors, is planned to open in the fall of 1984 at the corner of East Main Street and Bellows Road.

Housing for the Elderly

Westborough has a growing population of senior citizens that also demands adequate housing. Apartments to house the elderly were built in 1972 on Mayberry Drive and in 1977 at Westboro Country Village on Beach Street. An \$2.35 million development with thirty-six units of subsidized elderly housing, to be built on ten acres at the Rogers property on East Main Street, was approved by the state in May 1984.

The Westborough Nursing Home opened on Colonial Drive in 1972. This 123-bed facility was bought in 1984 by Hillhaven Corporation, reportedly the second largest owner of nursing homes in the country. The

Beaumont Nursing Home opened its 140-bed facility on the corner of East Main Street and Lyman Street in December 1983. The owners, Daniel and Dorothy Salmon, have included a day care center for the elderly and plan to construct a separate apartment complex, the Willows, for senior citizens.

Civic and Social Organizations

Included in the civic and social organizations for adults in Westborough in 1984 are the following:

AMERICAN LEGION, Earle B. Stowell Parker Post #163. Founded in 1919.

COMMUNITY CHORUS. Established in 1971. James Harvey, first president; Faith Newark, director.

HUNDREDTH TOWN CHORUS. Founded in 1949. Mildred Wilhite, first president; Gilbert Grove, director from 1963-1981.

JAYCEES. Founded in 1968. Richard Lilley, first president.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, John Boyle O'Reilly Council. Established in 1894. John W. Slattery, First Grand Knight.

LIONS CLUB. Established in 1964. William Longstreet, first president.

MASONS, Siloam Lodge, A.F. and A.M. Established in 1866. George Forbes, first Grand Master.

NEWCOMERS CLUB. Organized in 1970 by Kris Parkin. Reorganized in 1979.

OLD TIME CLUB. Founded in 1921. Lucy Putnam Small, first president.

ROTARY CLUB. Established in 1969. Nelson Ball, first president.

ROUND TABLE. Founded in 1889. Louis E. Denfeld, Sr., first president.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS, Post 9013. Aldolphus D. Nava Post established in 1947. Robert Johnson, first commander.

WESTBOROUGH ARTISTS ASSOCIATION. Organized in 1968 by Betty

*Selected Data for Westborough, Massachusetts
1960, 1970, 1980*

	1960	1970	1980
DEMOGRAPHICS			
Population	9,599	12,594	13,619
Density (persons/sq. mile)	456	598	647
Caucasian	99%	99%	98%
Median Age of Residents	N/A	26	32
Over 65 Years Old	14%	10%	10%
Median Family Income	\$6,058	\$12,837	\$27,355
EDUCATION			
Median School Years	11	13	13
High School or Higher	48%	51%	65%
College Educated	N/A	18%	31%
POLITICS			
Registered Voters	4,672	5,235	7,784
Republicans	39%	36%	29%
Democrats	23%	22%	29%
Independents	38%	42%	42%
HOUSING			
One-family Units	1,578	2,200	2,700
One-family Median Value	\$12,700	\$25,999	\$64,900
Apartments	169	425	1,667
Apartments, Median Rent	\$69	\$137	\$335
Owner Occupied	72%	71%	53%
RESIDENTS IN THE GENERAL LABOR FORCE			
Labor Force	3,078	4,627	10,550
As % of Population over 16	43%	54%	70%
Males in Labor Force	66%	64%	58%
Females in Labor Force	34%	36%	42%
INDUSTRY			
Firms in Westborough	181	219	375
Manufacturing Firms	24	30	38
Retail Stores	59	64	122
Workers in Westborough Firms	3,367	4,590	12,206

Source: US Census Data

Davis. David Lund, first president.

WESTBORO ATHLETIC & SOCIAL ASSOCIATION (W.A.S.A.)
Founded in 1935. Sid Aptt, first president.

WESTBOROUGH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. First established in 1950s. Reorganized in 1970. Phil Tucker, first president.

WESTBOROUGH CIVIC CLUB. Reorganized in 1977. Frank Stelmach, first president.

WESTBOROUGH FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION. Founded in 1920s.

WESTBOROUGH GARDEN CLUB. Founded in 1932. Barbara Craig, first president.

WESTBOROUGH GRANGE, Patrons of Husbandry, #116. Established in 1884. Hiram Broaders, first master.

WESTBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Established in 1889. John A. Fayerweather, first president.

WESTBOROUGH PLAYERS CLUB. Founded in 1937. Elmer Bennett, first president.

WESTBOROUGH RIFLE AND PISTOL CLUB. Organized in 1933. Frank Crooker, first president.

WESTBOROUGH WOMEN'S CLUB. Established in 1916. Mrs. Walter Metcalf, first president.

WESTBOROUGH Y.W.C.A. Organized in 1967 by Lorraine Farnsworth. Helen Wilson, first director.

Westborough's 250th Anniversary

As industrial development brought irrevocable change to Westborough, townspeople in 1967 fondly evoked the past to celebrate the town's 250th birthday. With healthy doses of enthusiasm and creativity, townspeople donned 18th century costumes and planned a birthday celebration to be remembered for many years. An Anniversary Committee, appointed in

February 1966, planned and organized events for all ages over the next year and a half.

Women in town formed Belle Groups to design period costumes, try out Colonial crafts, and hold fund-raisers. Over 600 women in thirty-eight Belle Groups put their town pride into action in friendly competition. Not to be outdone, the men in Westborough formed Brothers of the Brush groups and competed in growing the most luxuriant beard. They, too, were decked out in appropriate costume, complete with knickers and tricorner hats.

To help finance the Anniversary projects, Ye Olde Shoppe was established on the square to sell commemorative items including an historical booklet. Most of the Anniversary events were held between May 20 and June 4, 1967 for the convenience of those returning to Westborough from a distance. Among the events were a concert by the 250th Anniversary Chorus; the drama, "The Crucible"; and an ecumenical religious service. A fireman's muster, a drum and bugle competition, a children's field day, and a beard judging contest all drew enthusiastic crowds. Local industries opened their doors for plant tours, and historic homes were included on a house tour. In the Town Hall exhibits by industries, schools, and craftsmen were set up in an "Old Westborough Village."



Main Street during the 250th Anniversary Parade.

Courtesy of the Anniversary Committee.

Culminating the activities was the Anniversary Parade on June 4. More than 35,000 spectators marveled at the sixty floats, thirty marching units, antique cars, and horses that paraded before the reviewing stand. Admiral Louis Denfeld, former Chief of Naval Operations, served as parade marshal, and Annie Fales at age 99 led the parade as honorary marshal.

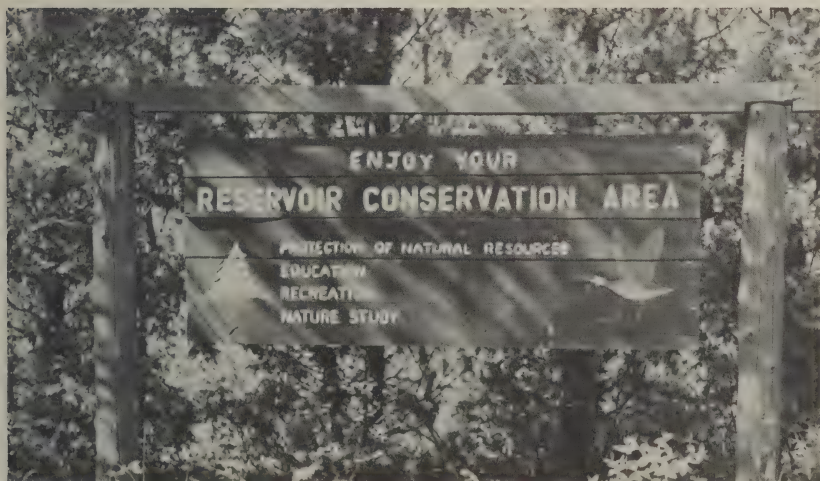
The actual anniversary of Westborough's incorporation as the 100th town in Massachusetts was commemorated by an elaborate ball held on the eve of November 17, 1967. Throughout the hectic anniversary year the Westborough community was caught up in a spirit of cooperation and pride in a common heritage.

The Town Acquires Land

Westborough Conservation Area

After the Massachusetts Turnpike was constructed in the south of Westborough near the town reservoir in the late 1950s, the town became concerned about protecting Westborough's water supply. In 1969 a conservation plan was drawn up with recommendations to acquire land surrounding Sandra Pond.

Between 1969 and 1971 Westborough acquired 144 acres around the reservoir with financial assistance from the state's Self-help Program. To reforest the area along Bowman Street, over 1,000 Scotch pine seedlings were set out. Aiding the DPW in planting the trees and shrubs were various



Bowman St. Conservation Area.

Photo by Paula Skog.

service organizations such as the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Garden Club. Three miles of nature trails and an amphitheater were built by the Scouts. The Westborough Conservation Area has continued to be used by community groups for outings, by the schools for nature study, and by the Recreation Department as the site of a popular summer day camp.



Westborough Country Club in 1984.

Photo by Paula Skog.

Town-owned Country Club

In a special Town Meeting on November 20, 1974 the residents of Westborough voted to purchase the 109-acre Westborough Country Club from the Avco/Dresser Corporation. The purchase price was \$418,000, with reimbursement figured at \$225,625 from the federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the state Department of Natural Resources. In its vote to acquire the property, the Town Meeting designated 34 acres for conservation, 67 acres for parks and recreation, and 8 acres in the north-west corner for municipal use.

The Country Club had been owned by Bay State Abrasives, and in 1955 the town was given the opportunity to accept as a gift the 72-acre Country Club including golf course, restaurant, and club house. The Town Meeting voters refused the offer, however, stating that Bay State could run the Club more efficiently.

When Bay State was sold to Avco and in turn to Dresser, the new owners did not wish to keep the golf course. In 1973 the town appointed

a Country Club Study Committee that conducted a town-wide survey about the property's future use. Although private developers expressed an interest in acquiring the property, residents chose to purchase the land for municipal purposes.

A committee to oversee the operation of the Westborough Country Club was appointed in 1979. This committee manages the golf course with out-side contracts granted for the operation of the pro shop and restaurant.

The Rogers Property

The town voted in 1978-1979 to purchase fifty-two acres, known as the Rogers property, on East Main Street across from Lyman Street for \$145,000. A commission appointed to study the property recommended that it be used for senior citizen housing, recreation, and municipal purposes. To that end the 1984 Town Meeting voted to reserve the front ten acres for housing for the elderly, with 10 to 15% set aside for low-income housing. The remainder of the land may be used for passive and active recreation as well as municipal projects.

In May 1984 the Executive Office of Communities and Development (EOCD) awarded \$2.35 million to Westborough to build forty-eight housing units on the Rogers property. Subsidized elderly housing will claim thirty-six units, and twelve units will be reserved for qualifying low-income families.

Blizzard of 1978

Buried under towering drifts of snow, Westborough came to a virtual standstill as a two-day blizzard on February 6 and 7, 1978 dumped over twenty inches of snow. With the wind howling at 50 m.p.h. and the snow falling at a rate of 1½ inches an hour, automobile travel was impossible.

The *Worcester Telegram* of February 8, 1978 reported, "A wild screaming two-day blizzard ended last night after effectively closing down communities from Central Massachusetts east to Boston and obliterating roads, highways, cars, and homes under snowdrifts 11 feet and higher."

When the storm reached its peak on Monday night, thousands of motorists abandoned their cars on the highways and sought makeshift shelter in schools, churches, and municipal buildings. Governor Michael Dukakis declared a "state of total and continuing emergency."

All state highways, including Routes 9, 495, and the Mass Pike, were shut down to everything but emergency vehicles. The National Guard, as well as Army and Navy units, were mobilized. Motorists found trapped in their cars were rescued and brought to shelters. Highways could not

be plowed until several days later when all the abandoned cars had been cleared away.

Some Westborough commuters were stranded when Route 9 in Southborough was shut down in both directions; they numbered among the hundreds of motorists given shelter for several days at St. Mark's School. In Westborough itself the Town Hall served as emergency shelter for travelers unable to reach their homes.

The February 15 *Westborough News* noted, "Police and firemen did yeoman's duty under the worst possible conditions. Cruisers became stuck in the snow and had to be towed. Stranded motorists were transferred from town to town, dug out, aided in every possible way ... There were eight snowmobilers who took food and medicines to isolated and snowed-in folks. Prescriptions were delivered by police and firemen on foot when vehicles failed. There were EMT's with kits strapped to their backs; the Explorer Scouts were everywhere, neighbors helping neighbors, people checking on people."

The roads in Westborough remained closed to nonemergency traffic for a week; those vehicles violating the traffic ban were confiscated. Those who ventured out did so on snowmobiles, cross-country skis, or by foot. There was an unfamiliar calm, a tranquility about the town as the customary din of traffic was silenced.

Snowbound Westborough residents banded together in the crisis with almost a holiday comraderie. Neighborhood plowing parties were organized, summoning all available shovels, snowblowers, and able bodies to clear off driveways and paths. At each stop adults, children, and dogs were added to the workcrew. During the enforced week's vacation when schools, businesses, and highways were officially closed, townspeople settled down to an unrushed lifestyle, reminiscent of earlier times.

Energetic, or perhaps claustrophobic, neighbors volunteered to walk downtown to shop for essential food for the neighborhood. Ironically, Westborough ran completely out of bread before the week's end since the truck carrying its bread supply was turned back when discovered to be transporting Twinkies, a nonessential food.

There were no serious injuries caused by the Blizzard of '78, but considerable property damage occurred when the roof of the North Star Youth Forum on Bridle Lane collapsed under the weight of the snow. The two-rink ice arena, built in 1973 at a cost of \$1.3 million, was considered a total loss and had to be rebuilt.

Industrial Development

As rail transportation had impacted Westborough's industrial growth

in the 19th century, interstate highways influenced the town's expansion during the second half of the 20th century. Cars dominated the American transportation scene, and access to highways became the key to opening up areas to development.

With the completion of the Massachusetts Turnpike (Route 90) to Boston in 1964 and Route 495 through Westborough in 1965 and 1966, Westborough found itself at the junction of highways leading to all points in New England. The construction of important interchanges between Route 495 and Route 9 (1968) and Route 495 and the Mass Pike (1969) firmly fixed Westborough at a "crossroads of New England." Businessmen turned their attention to Westborough as a logical new site for industrial and commercial development.

By 1984 Westborough had four companies each employing a workforce of over 1,000: these major employers are Data General with over 3,000 employees; Bay State Abrasives with about 1,100; Massachusetts Electric/New England Electric with 1,000; and GTE with approximately 1,000. Other companies that employ over 100 workers are Alden Electronics, Astra, Bullard Abrasives, Chase Paper, Cumberland Farms, Digital Equipment, Koch Process Systems, Polyform, and Smith Valve.

Descriptions of these companies are listed here in order of their establishment in town. The data used has been taken from the current *New England Directory of Manufacturing*, *Moody's Guide*, and annual reports. Particular attention has been given to those firms with sales listed over \$1 million.

Development Until 1960

Tufts Machine Corporation

The oldest Westborough company still in operation is Tufts Machine Corporation, located in the old "car barn" or trolley garage, on East Main Street. Founded in Roxbury in 1914 by James Tufts, the company moved to Brigham Street in Westborough in 1918. Here it remained until 1930 when it relocated to the car barn of the electric street railway. For over sixty-five years Tufts Machinery has been engaged in contract machine work of all sizes. During World War II Tufts employed over fifty to do government contract work; today the company employs about fifteen.

Bay State Abrasives

Bay State Abrasives was founded in the heart of Westborough in 1922. For more than forty years the company dominated Westborough's industrial scene. (See Chapter 5, 1920-1940.) A part of Dallas-based Dresser



Bay State Abrasives (est. 1922).

Courtesy of Bay State Abrasives.

Industries since 1971, Bay State employs over 1,100 as one of the nation's leading grinding wheel manufacturers.

Bullard Abrasive Products, Incorporated

George H. Bullard founded Bullard Abrasives in 1927 in Framingham after working at Norton Company and helping to establish Bay State Abrasives. Bullard supervised sales and production in his company as well as constructed his own ovens and presses. In 1929 Bullard Abrasives moved to Westborough to leased quarters on Brigham Street. In 1940 the company expanded with a move to its present site on Hopkinton Road. An important manufacturer of abrasive cutting and grinding wheels, Bullard Abrasives employs 125 workers in its Westborough plant.

Corrugated Paper Corporation

Founded in 1942 in Clinton by Michael Dowd, Corrugated Paper located in Westborough in 1946. Currently sixty-five are employed on the company's three-acre site on Milk Street. In its 96,000-square-foot facility Corrugated Paper manufactures corrugated shipping containers, interior packaging, and display materials.

Vee-Arc Corporation

Vee-Arc was founded by Aram Kalenian in 1948 at 50 Milk Street, on the site of the burned-out underwear and shoe factory. Kalenian had graduated from Westborough High in 1929 and from Worcester Polytech

in 1933. As a design engineer at Pratt and Whitney, he held many U. S. and foreign patents on flexible aircraft couplings. On his own in 1958 Kalelian invented the Reactron, a variable speed D. C. motor control. Vee-Arc presently employs fifty workers to manufacture electronic speed controls for A. C. and D. C. motors.



Alden Electronics, Inc., (The McHarrie Farm) Washington St.

Courtesy of Alden Electronics, Inc.

Alden Electronics, Incorporated

Alden Electronics manufactures weather equipment and recording equipment used by the U. S. Weather Service, the armed forces, U. S. Army Engineers, farmers, fruit growers, universities, and meteorologists on television. They produce direct graphic recording instruments and components, graphic communications systems, remote radar recorders, weather chart recorders, and weather satellite receiving terminals. Alden also produces Alfax paper, an electrosensitive recording paper used in the recording equipment.

Milton Alden and his son John founded the company in 1946 in Brockton. Alden Electronics came to Westborough in 1951 when it acquired the land and marshmallow factory of the McHarrie farm on Washington Street. From a 5,000 square foot facility with three employees, Alden has grown to employ 125 people in a plant encompassing 57,000 square feet.



Chase Paper Company, Oak St.

Photo by Paula Skog.

Chase Paper Company

Chase Paper, manufacturer of social and commercial stationery, located in Westborough in 1959 in the former J. S. Mason tape factory on Milk Street. The company had been founded in 1948 in Worcester by Arthur, Lewis, and Israel Chase. Converting the textile factory to suit its production, Chase Paper operated there until 1969 when it had the two old buildings demolished.

Chase Paper was the first to develop an office park in town when it constructed its 90,000 square foot facility on forty acres on Oak Street in 1969. Currently there are approximately 300 employees at Chase Paper. The plant can handle over 2,000 individual orders a day; at any one time there are 9,000 orders in process. Chase Paper was selected to print all the invitations to the 1981 Inauguration of President Ronald Reagan, an undertaking requiring over 2,000,000 impressions. Samples of these invitations are now housed in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C.

Iandoli's Shopping Center

The first shopping area to be developed away from the immediate downtown area was on the northeast side of the railroad tracks on East Main Street. In October 1959 the Iandoli family opened King's Market there; the supermarket later became known simply as Iandoli's. By the 1980s a bank, drugstore, rental agency, and florist were also located in the shopping center.



East Main St. at King's Market (now Iandoli's), 1959.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.

Development After 1960

Massachusetts Electric/New England Electric, built in 1964, was the first large corporation to locate in Westborough after Bay State Abrasives. Its headquarters along Route 9 forecast the direction the town's development would take in the ensuing twenty years.

New England Electric

In 1964, on sixty-seven acres, New England Electric constructed a one-story 130,000 square foot facility for 400 employees. This facility housed underground the REMVEC (Rhode Island, Eastern Massachusetts, Vermont Energy Control) computer, which monitors power generation in these three areas.

In 1969 New England Electric opened its six-story 186,000 square foot office building on the site. At that time more than 500 employees of New England Electric were relocated from Boston to the Westborough office. New England Electric is now headquartered at this location off Route 9 on 25 Research Drive. From this office New England Electric coordinates the activities of its subsidiaries—New England Power, a generation company; New England Service Company; New England Energy, a fuels, oil and gas exploration company; New England Electric Transmission Corporation; and NEES Energy, a conservation service company. It also directs activities of its retail companies—Massachusetts Electric, Narragansett Electric of Rhode Island, and Granite State Electric in New Hampshire.



New England Electric.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.

In 1984 New England Electric employs about 1,000 people at its Westborough headquarters.

Further Industrial Expansion

In 1966 Mass Oxygen Equipment, R. G. Shakour, and Roadway Express located in town. They were joined in 1968 by Engineering Plastics, which employs fifty workers to produce teflon-molded, extruded, and fabricated parts as well as ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene.

Gannon Motors moved to Route 9 in 1969. This year also marked the introduction of the industrial park to Westborough when Chase Paper presented the town with a site plan for the development of the forty-acre parcel it had purchased on Oak Street. Besides the Chase Paper facility, additional development in this industrial park included an indoor tennis club and an ice arena in 1972. The final addition to the park was Westinghouse in 1974. Currently this Westinghouse laboratory produces gas insulated transmission components.

Transportation systems in Westborough took off in a new direction in 1969 when Penn Central bought a large parcel along its railroad tracks on Flanders Road. Here the company built an automobile unloading yard, a development that represented a significant tie between rail and trucking systems.

Development in the 1970s

The proximity of the railroad, Route 495, and Route 9 interested businessmen like Wallace Yaffe, who had perhaps the greatest impact on Westborough's industrial development in the early 1970s. Yaffe was the first to buy up small pieces of property in Westborough and combine them into large parcels appealing to developers. He and other developers attracted companies to sites like the Central New England Industrial Park (State Properties) built on Flanders Road. The first occupants of this park were Parke Davis, Pittsburgh Plate Glass, and Security Engineering Plastics in 1971. They joined High Voltage, which had been constructed on Walkup Drive in 1970.

Route 9

Route 9 was the target for additional development in the 1970s with the establishment of J. Homestock (Levitz), Sears, Toyota, and Duddie Ford in 1972. Westborough's first fast food restaurant, MacDonald's, opened here that year as well. Weston Geophysical, the seismographic and geologic survey company, came to Route 9 in 1973. Rozefsky's, the clothing wholesaler, had been established, followed by King Instrument, producer of automatic cassette loaders, in 1975. A variety of enterprises were added along Route 9 in 1979 including Wendy's Restaurant, Bergson's Ice Cream Shop, and the Village Shopping Plaza.

Data General Corporation

Data General, Westborough's largest employer with over 3,000 employees, located its corporate world headquarters on Computer Drive off Route 9 in 1977. The company began in April 1968 in Hudson, Massachusetts. The founders designed, manufactured, and marketed the NOVA computer – the industry's first 16-bit minicomputer with four accumulators in the central processor. Data General's largest single manufacturing facility was built from 1968 through 1975 in Southborough; when expansion was necessary, the company purchased seventy-five acres on Route 9 in Westborough to construct its headquarters.

In January 1977 the new 300,000 square foot facility on Computer Drive was opened. This building was expanded to 688,000 square feet in 1978. This Data General headquarters housed the administrative offices, marketing and finance offices, product development labs and the manufacturing support group. With 15,000 employees worldwide and a 1983 total sales revenue of \$830 million, Data General offers a diverse product line of computers and software to the data processing market. Its families of 16- and 32-bit computers are used for information systems, technical pro-



Data General's Corporate World Headquarters.

Courtesy of Data General.

ducts, and Desktop Generation systems in industrial and office environments. Data General now has more than 150,000 installations worldwide of Data General Nova, microNova, ECLIPSE, CS, and Desktop Generation computer systems.

Otis Street

On Otis Street industrial expansion included Winter Hill Frozen Foods and Dana Films. Feecon began its manufacture of specialized fire-fighting equipment in 1972 on Flanders Road; in 1983 it moved to fifty acres on Otis Street.

Smith Valve Corporation

Smith Valve Corporation purchased over 120 acres on Fisher Street and constructed its international headquarters and manufacturing plant of 200,000 square feet there in 1976. That same year the company built Smith Parkway to connect its plant with Otis Street.

Founded in 1955 by James DeWolfe Smith and family in Worcester, Smith Valve manufactures a wide variety of forged steel gate, globe and check valves as well as ball valve products. These valves are used in the petrochemical, railroad, construction, textile, shipbuilding, and rubber industries. Its subsidiary, Morland Valve, acquired in 1973, is one of the most significant producers of marine valves and related equipment for nuclear-powered ships and submarines like the Trident.

The annual sales of the company are in excess of \$75 million. Beyond



Smith Valve Corporation, Fisher St.

Photo by Paula Skog.

its Westborough facility, Smith Valve has manufacturing plants in Hong Kong and Singapore. The family-owned company now includes the third generation of the Smith family.

Hopkinton Road

E. L. Harvey and Sons

E. L. Harvey and Sons, which had operated a trash business since 1949, expanded its facility on Hopkinton Road (Route 135) into a large landfill and recycling center in the 1970s. Bob and Jim Harvey built the business into an operation that serves both Worcester and Middlesex Counties. Harvey trucks retrieve compactor trash boxes from numerous hospitals, supermarkets, and industrial and office buildings in the two-county area.

Besides the town dump, the Harveys run a recycling center for paper and metal that operates from their baling building and metal building. More than 500 tons of corrugated paper a month are baled here and shipped to Belgium, Italy, Thailand, and Taiwan. Newsprint and computer printout paper are also recycled to markets in the United States and Canada. Metal is recycled here and sent abroad — mainly surplus iron, copper, brass, zinc, and lead.

Flanders Road

A one-mile federal highway, perhaps the shortest in the nation, was built in 1974 to connect Route 9 with Flanders Road. A project supported

enthusiastically by town officials, the access road furthered the cause of "intermodal transportation" by linking the railroad with interstate highways. This in turn attracted such developers as Cabot, Cabot and Forbes to the area in the 70s. The Kennet Corporation, makers of hydraulic power units, Security Engineering Machine, manufacturers of paper disintegrators, and Three-Way Van Lines located here during this period.

Cumberland Farms

Cumberland Farms purchased one hundred acres on Flanders Road in the early 1970s and soon became embroiled in one of the most emotional controversies over development that the town has known. Fearing that Cumberland Farms was buying wetland and filling it along Cedar Swamp without concern for the enviromental impact, residents vehemently protested the company's development plans. Many townspeople believed that the critical Cedar Swamp area was protected from development by the Hatch Wetlands Act, and heated debate about the project continued for over a year. The local conservationists' objections were overruled, however, when the state Department of Natural Resources granted Cumberland Farms a Hatch Act permit to develop the land in 1974-1975, and the suit brought against Cumberland Farms by the residents was dismissed.

Cumberland Farms' troubles were not over once construction began, since their choice of nonunion labor incensed the local union construc-



Cumberland Farms from Rt. 495.

Photo by Paula Skog.

tion workers. More than 250 building trade union members joined a four-day picket line in October 1974 and another 300 picketed in February 1975, when police had to be called in to restore order.

Operating its facility since 1975, Cumberland Farms now has on Flanders Road a bakery, warehouse, and bottling plant encompassing over 500,000 square feet. Currently all the bread for the thousand Cumberland Farms' stores in the Northeast is baked at their Westborough bakery. The fudge, sandwiches, and doughnuts are produced here as well. Cumberland Farms' bottling plant manufactures two-liter plastic bottles and fills them with carbonated beverages in its Westborough plant. The warehouse, serviced by the railroad, is a distribution center for the Northeast. Over 200 people are employed by Cumberland Farms.

Dover Instrument Corporation

In 1979 Dover Instrument Corporation joined the Flanders Road/Washington Street industrial development. Dover Instrument had been founded by John R. Hero in Waltham in 1964. The firm produces air bearings whose frictionless precision is used in most high technology industries including the video disk, computer, and laser instrument markets. The company expanded to a new facility on nineteen acres at 200 Flanders Road in 1983. A family owned and operated company, Dover Instrument Corporation now has six sons working with their father. The same Hero family was active in the business community of Westborough over one hundred years ago, when its ancestor Dr. John H. Hero founded Willow Park Seminary and Water Cure along the Boston-Worcester Turnpike (Route 9) in the 1860s.

Digital Equipment Corporation

Digital Equipment Corporation came to Westborough in the mid-1970s, first leasing space in West Meadow Plaza. In 1977 the company located on Flanders Road, and DEC has now expanded to four facilities in Westborough. At 201 and 205 Flanders Road about 100 employees package and distribute software kits; at 125 Flanders Road there is a small DEC warehouse. In 1982 Digital opened its facility at 17 Walkup Drive where 350 people are now employed in four different administrative groups.

Industrial Development After 1980

The 1980s have marked a new era of growth in Westborough's industries. In 1983-1984, there were 516 businesses and industries listed in Westborough, generating a daily population of 35,000 to 40,000. The predicted migration of businesses from the Boston/Route 128 region has taken hold. New corporations have identified Route 495 as the next in-

dustrial area to be developed, and once again Westborough finds its future impacted by transportation systems.

Recognizing Westborough's prime location at the convergence of the Mass Pike, Route 495, and Route 9, developers began buying up large parcels of land in town adjoining these major arteries. The newly created Westborough Office Park, Westborough Business Park, Westborough Executive Park, and Westborough Technology Park represent a building development with a potential worth over \$400 million.

Westborough Office Park

Developers Leggat, McCall and Werner and Robert Elder Associates purchased 138 acres on the southeast corner of Routes 9 and 495. Here they plan to construct fourteen buildings with over 1 million square feet of office space. In the spring of 1983 the first two office buildings—one 90,000 square feet and the other 60,000 square feet—were opened in the wooded park.

Westborough Business Park

Gerald Hines, Incorporated of Boston has begun developing the 100 acres it purchased along Route 9 and Flanders Road (the former Friberg farm). The "footprint" or first facility in the park was constructed for the GTE Systems Group in 1982.



GTE Government Systems.
Courtesy of GTE Government Systems.

GTE Systems Group

In November 1982 the GTE Systems Group moved from its leased facility at 155 Flanders Road to its new research and development facility on thirty acres in the Westborough Business Park. The 300,000 square foot building received a national award from the Industrial Research Council of Architects and Corporate Planners for its environmental planning and design.

The Strategic Systems Division of GTE located in Westborough specializes in the research, design, and development of scientific strategic command, control, and communication systems for major U. S. defense programs, particularly the MX missile. The company also designs and develops antenna and transmission systems, computerized training systems, electro-optics, and satellite communications systems. A total workforce of about 1,000 is employed at the new facility and the leased property on Flanders Road.

CSB Financial Corporation

In June 1984 a four-story 107,000 square foot building was leased by Hines to CSB Financial Corporation as its national corporate headquarters, housing also Consumers Bank and Realty World.

Central New England College

The Westborough campus of Central New England College is the third project to be developed by Hines in the park. Located on 14.8 acres, the college will occupy a three-story 84,000 square foot building by the fall of 1984. This facility will contain classrooms, engineering and computer science laboratories, a library, and offices.

In all, seven research and development or office buildings are planned for the Westborough Business Park over the next ten years.

Westborough Executive Park

Linpro of New England is developing fifteen acres along Route 9 near Lyman Street in its Westborough Executive Park. A three-story office building, the first of three planned, was constructed in 1983.

Westborough Technology Park

Seventy-eight acres on the northwest corner of Routes 9 and 495 were purchased by the Chiofaro Company for development. The master plan for the Westborough Technology Park calls for nine buildings to be constructed over a ten-year period. Nearby is located the Westborough Plaza

Hotel, a three-story luxury Howard Johnson hotel slated to open the winter of 1985.

Walkup Drive

Walkup Drive and Washington Street off Flanders Road also were caught up in the industrial growth of the 1980s.



Development of Flanders Rd. farmland (now Koch).

Photo by Rocco Paolini.

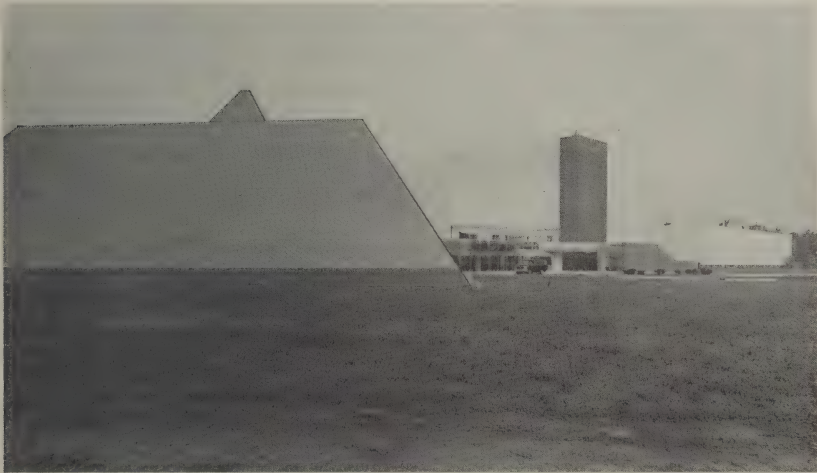
Koch Process Systems, Incorporated

Koch Industries, a large privately owned company, purchased the facility at 20 Walkup Drive from Helix Technology Corporation in 1981 and created Koch Process Systems. In 1984 there are about 180 employed at the facility.

A pioneer in the field of cryogenics — the use of ultracold temperatures to liquefy gases — Koch Process Systems designs and manufactures equipment used to separate and purify gases. The company's products are used in a variety of ways: in desulfurization systems to remove sulfur dioxide (a contributor to acid rain) from boiler flue gas, in enhanced oil recovery facilities to maximize the amount of oil that can be extracted from wells, in helium liquefiers to provide cooling for highly efficient superconducting magnets used in medical diagnostic equipment and particle physics research, and in radioactive waste treatment systems to protect the environment.

Otis Street

The industrial zone on the western border of town has also undergone a transformation in the 1980s. High-quality development was initiated by Smith Valve on its 120-acre site in 1976. The Town Meeting vote against a municipal airport on Otis Street in 1979 opened the former airport land to industrial development.



Astra U.S.A., Corporate Headquarters.

Courtesy of Astra U.S.A.

Astra U.S.A.

Astra U.S.A., a subsidiary of the pharmaceuticals company AB Astra of Sodertalje, Sweden, purchased fifty-six acres along Lake Hoccomocco in 1970. The company delayed developing the land, leasing part of it to the already existing private airport until the defeat of the proposed municipal airport in 1979.

In the fall of 1982 Astra U.S.A. opened its 67,000 square foot production plant and 52,000 square foot warehouse on Otis Street. Recognized as one of the most sophisticated pharmaceutical manufacturing plants in the world, the Astra facility in Westborough produces a line of injectable local anesthetics and topical anesthetics. In a streamlined loop throughout the four-story plant, pharmaceuticals are prepared and packaged, passing through sterile filling rooms with monitored purified air, to inspection lines, and onto robotized loading trucks.

Over 100 varieties of local anesthetics, particularly Xylocaine, used in

dentistry, obstetrics, and surgical operations are produced in the Westborough plant. These pharmaceuticals are sent to hospitals, doctors, and dentists throughout the United States. In fact, a major portion of the dental cartridges used in the United States are supplied by Astra.

The corporate headquarters for Astra U.S.A. moved from Worcester to Westborough in January 1984. Offices for administration, computer service, financing, and marketing are located in a unique glass pyramid. Included in the glass and steel headquarters is a physical training center for employees with a swimming pool and sauna; outdoor tennis courts, walking trails, and a running track are planned. All of Astra's operations in the United States are scheduled to be centralized in Westborough by the fall of 1984.

Route 9

Massachusetts Microelectronics Center

In May 1984 Westborough was selected as the site of the Massachusetts Microelectronics Center by the Massachusetts Technology Park Corporation composed of leaders from high tech industries, engineering schools, and state government. The Microelectronics Center was created by 1982 Massachusetts legislation to sharpen the state's competitive edge in the microelectronics field.

Westborough was chosen from a field of twenty-nine sites; its ideal location on major routes in a growing high tech area and its easy access to the participating Massachusetts industries and engineering schools were important factors in the selection. The \$40 million Microelectronics Center will be located on fifty acres of the 490-acre, state-owned Lyman School on Route 9. Here research and microchip fabrication facilities will be housed in existing buildings and possibly a new facility.

The project will be funded by industry grants of funds and equipment equaling \$20 million and matched by funds in government revenue bonds. The nine engineering schools involved in the Center will provide instructors and students and will be connected by a computer design network.

The Massachusetts Microelectronics Center in Westborough will be a training ground in semiconductor technology for engineering students as well as engineers already in the workforce. It is expected to provide employment for approximately 100 people.

Westborough of the Future

What Westborough will become in the year 2000, even in the next ten years, remains a question mark. Its present growth rate, however, has

guaranteed that the small town dotted with abundant orchards and dairies is gone forever. In its place is a new center for high technology, complete with office parks and corporate headquarters. The major highways through town are dominated by sleek high-rises and shopping centers, while homes spring up on the remaining open land. Ensuring that Westborough retains its Yankee character and natural beauty is the challenging task of foresighted planners and developers.

Selectman Raymond Welsh was born and brought up in Westborough and has lived through many of the changes: "Westborough has changed a lot, but for the good. In the future I think we'll see more shopping centers on the outskirts of town, high tech along Routes 9 and 495, and downtown will be doctors, lawyers, and dentists. The town has progressed slowly over the years and the planning has been terrific. Even with all the development, we haven't grown much in population—we're still under 14,000."

"One thing that has changed," says Welsh, "is that I used to be able to walk downtown and call everybody I met by name. I can't do that now. But I don't think that there are 'townies' and 'newcomers.' If people have chosen to live here for two or three years—have decided that Westborough is their town—then they are townies, too."

According to Selectman Richard McLeod, a delicate balance must continue to be struck between nonresidential and residential development. "I think this balance will be maintained by the way Westborough is presently zoned, with the industrial and business zones segregated from the residential areas," says McLeod. "Professional assessors who were studying Westborough recently said that this is one of the best laid out towns in the state with its industrial zones located at the east and west ends."

"By and into the 1990s I believe a good portion of the industrial areas will be built up. The big question remaining is what will happen to the state land in town. If that is developed, the destiny of Westborough will no longer be in our hands, and that will change the character of Westborough. Westborough, in any event, will continue as a crossroads in a pattern set by its history."

"Westborough will continue to grow in the high tech industry in the future," comments Selectman Richard Foster, "and I believe that residential development will begin to catch up. This growth in housing demand will have its impact on surrounding towns as well, since not a lot of land is left in Westborough to develop because of its topography and wetlands."

"The really rapid development rate made it difficult for the infrastructure to keep up; improvements in the town services—like water and sewers—couldn't occur as rapidly. This may put a check on development. But there will be more industrial development along Route 9 at the



Westborough Square in the 1880's.

Courtesy of Rocco Paolini.

racetrack and on Otis Street. Ultimately the market demand for building space will determine how fast the growth will be."

Stephen Doret, chairman of the Westborough Planning Board, observes, "The Route 495 and Route 9 region is the next developable area for industry. The new high technology corporations will develop Route 495, just as the electronics industry did Route 128. Developers are looking for a certain type of community, one with a good tax structure. Westborough has an attractive dossier to offer. It is still 60% residential and has a reasonable amount of services, a low school debt, and a well-managed tax structure."

"With the industrial district zoning of 40% development and 60% open space passed in 1983, Westborough will attract the cream of development — the corporate officers who want and can afford the open space concept. Developers who really want to build in Westborough will construct a first-quality facility."

Westborough was called the "Crossroads of New England" in a *Boston Globe* article on May 22, 1983. According to the *Globe*, Westborough is slated to become the center of research and development for high tech industries and an important office address for blue-chip companies of all types. At a National Association of Industrial and Office Parks seminar, the *Globe* reported, "The developers discussed space inventories that could total over five million sq. ft. along 495 and Route 9 and near the turnpike in Westborough. But the investors also emphasized that their bullishness



Westborough Square in the 1980's.

Photo by Paula Skog.

does not apply as much to the present as it does to the next five to ten years. The development strategy, noted several developers, is to phase building construction over that time frame."

When the town was selected as the location of the Massachusetts Microelectronics Center in 1984, Westborough was singled out to become the center of microelectronics research and development for regional industry and engineering schools. This center's goal is not only to train specialized engineers but also to serve as a vanguard in the world's semiconductor industry.

Clearly Westborough is on the beaten path once more.



FARMS IN WESTBOROUGH

Agricultural Heritage

The rich flat meadow lands of Westborough, particularly around Lake Chauncy, enticed early settlers from Marlborough and Sudbury to cultivate this western borough. Agriculture was then the key to survival; no matter what other talents an individual could claim, farming was the common occupation shared by minister, pioneer, and doctor alike.

The first 150 years after Westborough's incorporation were spent laying the foundation for the prosperous farms that covered the landscape in the mid-1800s. In 1865 there were 184 farms in town raising 885 milk cows, 276 horses, 151 oxen, and 404 swine. Twenty years later 335 people worked on the town's 155 farms. A total of 4,205 acres were under cultivation, with thirty of the farms ranging from 100 to 150 acres, and six from 150 to 300 acres. The production of Indian corn, potatoes, eggs, cereals, butter, and milk became vital to Westborough's economy.

As the town became more populated and industrialized, the large original farms were divided up for successive generations. At the beginning of the twentieth century a good proportion of Westborough residents earned their living from the land.

Typically these small farms were self-supporting with corn and hayfields, a large vegetable garden, and a barnyard with hens, oxen,



Farm view from Fay Mountain.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.

horses, milk cows, and perhaps a few pigs or sheep. The farms were delineated by winding stone walls – testimonials to the rocky New England soil and Yankee independence. Beside the stone walls were planted apple trees; usually hardy Baldwins were favored in the days before imported pests made spraying a necessity.

After World War I along the country roads on the outskirts of town – beyond the din of the factories and trains – were dairy, vegetable, and poultry farms. The poultry farmers included Sprague on West Main Street (Wilkinson), Breedlove on Adams Street, Marshall on Arch Street, Brown on Nourse Street, Ellis on Bowman Street, as well as the Kaprelian turkey



Tending the pigs at Fay Mountain Farm.

Courtesy of Richard Gilmore.



**Poultryman, William Ellis,
Bowman Street.**

Courtesy of William Ellis.

farm on Route 9 (La Cuchina). A pig farm was run by the Andrews family of Old Nourse Street, while the Aronsons on West Main Street (the High School) and Harveys on South Street were cattle dealers.

By the end of the 1930s, the world of the small farmer had changed irrevocably. According to Arthur Nourse, who worked his ancestors' farm until 1976, mechanization was a big factor in the change. "Tractors came in during the late '30s and early 40s," observed Nourse. "Before, you were limited to what you could work with a team of oxen or horses, but with a tractor you could work more land, and small farms weren't practical.

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Will have one car load of Indiana Cows to be sold on Consignment. Two loads of Minnesota Cows. An opportunity to buy what you want at Auction Prices.

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Early Westborough farm workers.

Courtesy of Richard Gilmore.

It was also expensive to convert all your farm machinery over to tractor from horse-drawn." Ed Uhlman noted, "You could keep a horse on what you raised on the farm, but a tractor was expensive since you needed gas and oil."

As the small farms were bought out by the larger farms, the stone wall boundaries were ripped down and the apple trees cut. After World War II labor became increasingly difficult to find as more and more young men turned to burgeoning industry for their livelihood. When some of the barns burned in town, the older farmers didn't bother to replace them, knowing that their sons had no interest in carrying on the family farm.

The completion of the Massachusetts Turnpike and Route 495 in the 1960s brought Westborough to the attention of developers. Farmers with good flat land were offered a price hard to resist for their property. One by one the farms were sold and cleared. Housing developments sprang up in place of hay, corn, and clover.

Westborough Farms Today

In 1984 Westborough is dotted with a few scattered farms. Town roads still lead past pastures where horses, sheep, and cattle graze. Enterprising folks can pick their own raspberries, strawberries, and blueberries on



Nourse Farm, 80 Nourse St., ell, c. 1729, main house, c. 1800.

Photo by Paula Skog.

Westborough farms. Fruit-laden apple orchards beckon both residents and out-of-towners to "pick their own" each fall.

Thanks to the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Act passed in Massachusetts in 1977, Westborough will always be assured of at least one farm, the Nourse farm on Nourse Street.

"We applied to the State to be considered under the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Act," explained Arthur Nourse. "People came out to look at the farm to see if it fell into the category and to appraise our farm for its agricultural and development value. If it qualified, the State would buy the development rights by paying the difference between the agricultural value and the development value."

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts bought the development rights to 140 acres of the Nourse farm in 1980. At that time Westborough Town Meeting voted to pay for a share of the rights in order to have a voice in the future use of the land. According to the legislation, the land falling under its auspices may not be developed for any purpose except agriculture, although it may be left open space. Since the land is also protected from eminent domain proceedings, its food producing value is protected for the future.

Since 1975 Jonathan Nourse has grown small fruit on the farm. Presently he has eighteen acres of strawberries, two acres of fall raspberries, one acre of summer raspberries, and has set out blueberry bushes. Like other Westborough farmers, the Nourses also sell hay and wood.



Picking strawberries at the Nourse Farm, 1982.

Photo by Marcia Nourse.

Other small fruit businesses in Westborough include Vine Hill Farms owned by Olavi Lahna on 217 Ruggles Street, Barbara and Bill Goff's raspberry patch at 205 Ruggles Street, and the Denny Brook blueberry patch owned by Lillian Grove on 140 South Street.

From July through October a number of farm stands offer residents locally grown vegetables. They include Ed Uhlman on 210 East Main Street, Michael "Red" Berberian on 60 Otis Street, Paul Baptiste on 55 Bowman Street, Jim Harvey at 120 South Street, Richard Dwinnell at 8 Upton Road, and Paul Mugford at 8 Warburton Lane.

Horticulture has played an important role in town history, since from the 1920s through the 1960s Westborough was a carnation growing center for New England. The MacGuffog and Brigham carnation greenhouses along Route 9 may have disappeared, but others carry on the horticultural tradition. Annuals are grown and sold from greenhouses by Les and Suzanne Wilkinson at 172 West Main Street and by Robert McGoldrick at the Green Thumb on Route 9. McGoldrick began selling potted holiday plants to wholesalers in 1952 and recently expanded to the retail market. Locally the Green Thumb has 40,000 square feet of greenhouses and eleven acres under cultivation. Perennials are the specialty of Carmel Sandock and Carolyn Mostecky at the Bowman Street Jackstraw Gardens and of Paul Mugford on Warburton Lane. Also on Warburton Lane, Beatrice Warburton hybridizes irises that have earned her an international reputation.

Evergreens and flowering shrubs are grown and sold at Herb Wilkinson's Hi-Hill Nursery at 172 West Main Street and at Roger Bogosian's Sunnyslope Gardens on Route 9. On a hilltop on Ruggles Street that was the Perrin nursery in the late 1800s, Joe and Gladys Haburay now grow Christmas trees.

Dairies are no longer a common sight along Westborough roads, but there are still farm animals to be seen. Beef cattle, mainly Herefords, are raised by Robert Harvey on Hopkinton Road, Earl Hutt on West Main Street, Bert Adams on Warren Street, and Carl Goodall and Norman Keller on Morse Street. Paul Brown has four Scottish Highland cattle on Hopkinton Road, which fascinate passersby.

Although the pair of llamas no longer reside at Dr. Hennessey's Tumblebrook Farm on Denny Street, Arabian horses still graze in the pasture. The thirty-five horses in town can be found at Tumblebrook Farm, Quick Farms on Adams Street, Alcock farm on Robin Road, Emery farm on Chestnut Street, and the Ashworth's Glen Rock Farm on Glen Street. Sheep can be seen grazing at the Nourse farm, Emery farm, and the Smiths' on Bowman Street. The Gofmoor Farm on 138 Fisher Street raises small animals for laboratory research, a business begun by Phyllis Goff in 1958. The only dairy herd left in town is that of Howard Uhlman on 228 East Main Street, a far cry from the thirty dairies found in Westborough fifty years ago.



Bergevin's Greenhouses, formerly Brigham's, Rt. 9 and Lyman St.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.



Reuben Maynard/Glen Rock Farm, 45 Glen St., c. 1723.

Photo by Paula Skog.

The Dairy Industry

Early Dairy Business

The dairy business was vital to Westborough's economy in the 1800s. Local farmers had supplied the Boston market with milk since the advent of the Boston-Worcester railroad in 1834. Milk dealer Jason Chamberlain arranged shipping Westborough and Southborough milk to Boston in a freight car attached to a morning passenger train.

In 1840 the Westboro Milk Company was organized by John Fayerweather, George Denny, Abijah Wood, Elmer Brigham, and Josiah Brigham. For over a quarter of a century S. Deane Fisher served as this company's local milk agent. Soon several Boston milk dealers formed the competing Boston Milk Company to negotiate the sale and delivery of Westborough milk to Boston. James Kelly, who lived at 47 South Street, became a prosperous milk dealer in the 1880s.

In 1885 with improved stock quality and more efficient storage methods, the number of milk cows in Westborough had increased to 1,055 and 521,268 gallons of milk were produced. This was more than double the production of 1865.

Local dairymen were not always content with the dealers' prices, however. In 1865 they formed a cooperative Milk Producers Association and built a cheese factory on Brigham Street to use the surplus milk. This independent venture proved unprofitable, however, and was disbanded

in 1873. In 1885, once again unhappy with their treatment by the milk dealers, Westborough farmers organized into a Westborough Creamery Association. This business also failed to earn a profit and was discontinued in a few years.

The milk business in the 1880s was dominated by the C. Brigham & Company, which had bought out the Westborough Milk Company. This company, organized by Westborough native Cyrus Brigham, was recognized in 1890 as the largest milk company in the world, worth more than \$1 million.

In these years as many as 2,500 cans were shipped each morning on the Westborough milk car to Boston from the depot on Brigham Street. (At that time one can contained 8½ quarts of milk.) The milk came not only from Westborough but from dairies in Shrewsbury, Northborough, Grafton, Hopkinton, and Upton as well.

Edward C. Bates, in 1890, writing of the milk shipment from Westborough says, "The present daily supply, amounting to about 750 cans, comes from 150 dairies, which contribute one to thirty cans each. . . The contractors now take, at a somewhat lower price than when the supply was limited, all the milk which the farmers produce, using the surplus for butter and cheese."

Although the town's milk production never reached the same heights, Westborough's many dairies continued to play an important part in the town's economy through the 1940s.

Twentieth Century Dairies

Although the heart of Westborough became increasingly industrialized, the main body of the town was farmland until World War II. From the 1920s to the 1940s, over forty dairies lined Belmont Street (Route 9), West Main, East Main, Flanders Road, Adams Street, and the smaller roads running off into the countryside.

The Westborough dairymen in the early 1900s brought their milk to the freight spur of the railroad on Brigham Street and later to a railroad loading platform on Water Street. The dairies' involvement with the railroad ended in the 1930s when large dairies like Deerfoot in Southborough, Twin Maple in Cochituate, and Hood in Worcester began to pick up the milk cans daily at the individual farms by truck.

Edward Uhlman, whose family began their Sunset View Dairy on East Main Street in 1924, remembers, "In those days it was all farms. Everybody had a few cows and made milk. They fed the horses and cows the hay and fodder they grew and didn't have the expensive grain they need today. My father bought the Gilmore farm and several farms nearby — the

Statzell farm where my brother Howard has his dairy and ice cream stand, the Chamberlain farm across the street, the Poskitt farm on Smith Street, and the Haskell farm on Haskell Street. We ended up with about 400 acres in all."

"I learned to milk by hand before I was ten years old and, and before 1930 we would even drive the herd right down Route 9. We used to sell our raw milk to Deerfoot Farms in Southborough. Francis Adams would come around every morning and pick up the milk in 20-quart and 40-quart cans and deliver it to Deerfoot to be processed."

Westborough dairies kept milk cool overnight by packing it in ice from ponds on the farm or from Mason Taft's ice house on Lake Chauncy. Al Bowman, who grew up on a farm on Route 9, cut Chauncy ice with his family. "In the 1930s when the ice was ten inches to a foot thick, my father and uncles would drive the horses out on the ice, lay out the ice field into thirty-inch-square cakes, and cut it with horse-drawn saws," recalls Bowman. "Then we slid the cakes along a channel with pointed forks and up a runway into the wagon. Mason Taft had a farm on the northeast corner of Lyman Street, and he owned the big ice house where the Chauncy beach is now. The ice was packed in sawdust and delivered to the homes and dairies in town. People would put a card in the window if they wanted the iceman to stop."

Ed Uhlman adds, "We'd bring our horses down to the blacksmith John



Ice House on Lake Chauncy.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

Marcy on Summer Street to put winter horseshoes with spikes on them so the horses could walk out on the ice." Marcy moved to Charles Street and continued to work as a blacksmith until the horses were replaced by tractors.

The Nourse farm on Nourse Street is the oldest farm in Westborough to be continuously operated by one family. Ebenezer and William Nourse started the farm in 1722 and today Jonathan Nourse continues the tradition with his small fruit farm.

Arthur LeSure (Sugar) Nourse, Jonathan's father, operated a dairy with a herd of fifty-five cows on this land until 1976. "A lot of milk in the 1930s and 1940s went to the New England Milk Association in the Worcester district where dealers distributed it to big dairies like Meola, Lundgren and Jonaitis, or Hood," explained Nourse. "Westborough had mainly small dairies, and they didn't process their own milk."

In fact, state regulations regarding the quality and safety of milk were not drawn up until 1932. In the Town Report of 1931 animal inspector Dr. Charles Reed urged local dairymen to pasteurize all milk they offered for sale. He wrote, "Without a regulation that will ban from our town all diseased animals, or some action taken to render contaminated milk harmless, our milk supply will continue to endanger the lives of our people."

That year a Child Health Association was established in Westborough. Upon examining the Westborough schoolchildren, the Association discovered that 52% of the sickly children were suffering from diseases traced to contaminated milk. A lab in the High School was used to examine and pasturize the raw milk brought by the pupils from home. Despite the warnings, families persisted in buying raw milk since it was cheaper and readily available.

Forty Westborough dairies in 1931 agreed to have their herds examined and put under state or federal supervision. Nearly 500 head of cattle were found to be infected by tuberculosis and were slaughtered that year. Old stables were rebuilt and disinfected. In 1934 state regulations required inspection and registration of all dairies under the Milk Regulatory Board, and every dairy selling milk was required to take out a license approved by the local Board of Health.

A few dairymen sold their milk around town, but it was the Fay Dairy, operated by Kendall Fay, that supplied most of the townspeople with milk. This dairy processed and bottled its own milk in its processing plant at 94 East Main Street. The Fay Dairy, which had begun in the early 1900s, kept its 80-cow herd pastured on the old Jonathan Fay farm on the corner of West Main and Jasper Streets.



Kendall Fay at Fay's Dairy,
94 E. Main St.

Courtesy of Ida Marshall.

The Fay Dairy not only delivered milk door-to-door each day but supplied village stores like Lowe's, Wagner's Bakery, and Thompson's Spa. All Westborough schoolchildren drank milk at lunchtime supplied by the Fays. In 1966 the Fay milk route and herd were sold. According to son Pete Fay, "It became difficult to get labor after World War II. Many people began to prefer to get milk from the supermarkets. Bottles were being replaced by cartons, and to switch our bottling plant over would be difficult and expensive for my father."

Other changes had occurred that made life difficult for the small dairy farmers. "The Depression was very hard," said Ed Uhlman. "The federal government passed the Soil Conservation Act to help farmers. You could be called a farm if you had five acres or sold at least \$500 a year in agricultural products. In Westborough fifty-two farms signed up for aid under the Act, but there were some others that didn't." The federal Milk Order in 1937 also aided local farmers by regulating the price of milk; this protected area dairymen against price cutting from outside dealers.

After the Depression and World War II, the farms began to be sold off. By 1950, however, there were still thirty dairies in Westborough.

Seventeen dairymen had herds of twenty-five head or more. In the west side of town these were Al Dunn and Bill Libbey on West Main Street, Herbert Adams on Adams Street, Arthur Nourse on Nourse Street, Ray Roy on Ruggles Street, Howard Goff on Fisher Street, and Fred Nichols on Mill Road.

The eastern section of Westborough had the large dairies of Jack Walkup on Flanders Road, Lowell Walker on Park Street, Carl Friberg and John Katunas on Route 9, Frank Poskitt on Smith Street, and Howard Uhlman, Henry Brady, and Ed, Ray, and Parker Uhlman on East Main Street. The Aronsons on West Main Street (the High School) and Bob and Emory Harvey on South Street were dairymen as well as cattle dealers.

According to Ed Uhlman a factor that caused many Westborough farmers to turn away from dairying was the federal regulation passed in the 1950s requiring all milk to be stored in large bulk tank coolers. The coolers were considered more efficient and sanitary than the old milkcans. "The bulk tanks were an expensive investment of several thousand dollars," Uhlman observed, "and you needed a big herd to keep the tanks full. A dairy with just a few cows couldn't make it, so many farmers in Westborough gave up making milk and some began raising vegetables instead." Increasingly, a successful dairy required more cows, more land for grazing, more labor, machinery, and capital.

On the 250th anniversary of Westborough in 1967 there were fifteen



Dairy cows of Howard Uhlman, 228 E. Main St., 1984.

Photo by Paula Skog.

dairy farmers left in town; by 1972 this number had been reduced to eight. In 1984 only one dairy is left, that of Howard Uhlman on 228 East Main Street.

Howard Uhlman has operated his dairy since 1942. He believes that the capital needed to run a small dairy is costly compared to the returns. "Nowadays a tractor costs \$20,000 and a good cow up to \$1,500. Feed and fertilizer are expensive. With land value going up, it's hard to buy a piece of land. We opened up our ice cream stand about thirteen years ago because we had to do something to keep up the farm."

"I have a herd of fifty Holsteins and milk about thirty-two. They give 1,200 pounds of milk a day that I sell to the Garelick Dairy in Franklin. My farm isn't big enough to have help so I handle the milking with my wife. Farming's hard work," Uhlman added, "I work from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day, 365 days a year with no benefits or vacations. The boys when they grow up just don't want to go into farming anymore."

Westborough Orchards

As the many apple trees in back yards and along winding roads attest, Westborough was and still is apple country. The rolling hills offer good frost-free elevations, the ledgy soil holds moisture well, and the weather conditions produce quality fruit.

Apples were an important crop for the early settlers, and eventually



Quick's Orchards, formerly Fay Mountain Farm.

Photo by Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

Westborough hills were covered with orchards. In the first half of the twentieth century, there were about eight apple orchards in town—Ed Emery on Chestnut Street, Dick Gilmore on Adams Street, Kenneth Craig on West Main Street, Walter McTaggart on West Main Street, Carl Henry on Fisher Street, the Baldwin/Whittemores on Morse Street, Stanford on Lackey Street, and Perry Arnold on Spring Street (later Kimmelman and Leombruno).

The Emery orchard was planted before World War I and produced peaches, apples, pears, and cherries. Sons Clarence “Rah” and Belknap remember their father’s orchard on Chestnut Street. “We sold some of the fruit from a stand, and people came and bought a good deal from the farm. Dad sent some fruit wholesale to New York and to Worcester,” recalled Rah Emery.

“He must have put the cider mill in about World War I,” added Belknap Emery. “It had a big, one-cylinder 12-horsepower engine with a huge flywheel. You could hear that engine downtown—punk, punk, punk. The kids downtown would hear the engine running and they knew that Ed was making cider. They’d come up crosslots, and they’d drink all the cider they could hold. Dad never said no to a boy or girl, even though some of them had disastrous results from drinking too much cider.”

Most of the orchards have disappeared into housing lots, but in 1984 there are three orchards still operating in Westborough. These are the Zane and Evelyn Arnold orchard on Spring Road, the George and Helen Parker orchard on Spring Rd., and Quick’s orchard managed by Ken Quick on Adams Street. The Parkers bought the Kimmelman orchard in 1947; the Arnolds acquired the nearby Stanford and Kimmelman orchards in 1948. The Gilmores sold their Fay Mountain Orchard to Joseph Quick in the 1970s.

Westborough orchards yield a vast array of apples: MacIntosh, Ida Red, Milton, Viking, MacCoun, Northern Spy, Baldwin, Cortland, Red and Golden Delicious, Empire, and Gravenstein. The local fruit is sold from orchard stands and is also brought to the New England Produce Center in Chelsea.

In the days of less restrictive labor laws whole Westborough families would take to the neighboring orchards to earn pocket money during the harvest. Now finding experienced and willing help has become a problem. One solution to this problem is the “pick-your-own” policy adopted by the Arnolds. Their orchard of semi-dwarf trees allows 90% of the fruit to be picked from the ground. Quick’s orchard also features a pick-your-own program but has been certified by the U.S. Labor Department to employ Jamaican pickers. The three orchards in Westborough attract



Apple pickers at
Gilmore's Fay
Mountain Farm,
Adams St.

Courtesy of Richard Gilmore.

residents and city dwellers alike to pick juicy fruit and sample the cider on a crisp autumn afternoon. In the minds of many, Westborough can still be considered rural since these orchards grace its hills.

Westborough Agricultural Society

At the beginning of the 1800s farmers in Westborough were eager to learn new techniques and encourage the farming industry. They formed the Westborough Agricultural Society in 1839 with Lovett Peters as the first president. The Society flourished for the next fifty years. Its cattle shows and agricultural fairs were eagerly awaited by townspeople as important social and educational events.

In 1895 the Agricultural Society became incorporated with the idea of purchasing land for horse races, cattle shows, and bicycling. For this purpose it purchased 19 ½ acres on Lyman Street running from East Main Street to Belmont Street/Route 9 (Beaumont Nursing Home). A half-mile track for horse racing was constructed as well as a bicycle track with three laps to a mile.

Sid Aptt recalls, "The Horse Trotting Track was a place used as a means

of displaying driving or trotting horses, not really for racing. People like Dr. Knight had fancy driving horses that were used here. The same people used to race these horses on the ice at Lake Chauncy."

For the next ten years the Society continued its new sporting interests. In 1905, however, tastes had shifted. The Agricultural Society transferred its assets to the Westborough Grange, and the trotting park faded into history.

The Westborough Grange

Founded on February 22, 1884, the Westborough Grange has played a part in the community life of Westborough for one hundred years. Thirty-nine charter members organized the Westborough Grange, No. 116, Patrons of Husbandry, and Hiram Broaders served as its first master.

In 1897, with its membership grown to 171, the Westborough Grange voted to buy a permanent hall. The former Methodist Church on Milk Street was purchased for this purpose and a mortgage taken out for \$3,000. This building had served as the Grange Hall ever since. It is here that the annual Grange fair is held, which offers cash prizes for the best fruit, flowers, and vegetables. During the many years when farms dominated the region, the Grange fair, masquerade balls, and lectures were an important facet of the town's social life.



Home of Hiram Broaders/2nd Edmond Rice House

218 Milk St., c. 1707.

Photo by Paula Skog.

ANNUAL Grange Fair

Grange Hall, Westboro

**Friday, Sept. 13
Saturday, Sept. 14**

Afternoon and Evening

Baby Show, Fri. Aft. 3 P.M.
ADMISSION 10c

Fashion Show, Sat. Aft. 2.15
ADMISSION FREE

**Huge Amateur Contest and
Entertainment Both Nights**
ADMISSION EVENINGS 25c

Old Fashioned BAKED BEAN SUPPER
Sat. Night 5.30 to 7

The Grange's purpose continues to be to promote agriculture on a local, state, and national level through meetings, bulletins, and exhibitions. The 100-member Westborough Grange, from its annual produce auction to its monthly meetings, continues to uphold that tradition.



THE CHANGING FACE OF WESTBOROUGH

History of the Schools

The founding fathers of Massachusetts Bay Colony had great respect for education, and as early as 1647 passed a law requiring every township of at least fifty householders to appoint a teacher for the children, the wages to be paid by the parents and masters of the children. When the wilderness had been conquered and the town established, Westborough residents turned their attention toward training their children's minds. In 1726 the first School Committee of Westborough, made up of Daniel Warren and Edward Baker, was charged by town vote to "procure a suitable schoolmaster to teach children to Read, write, and Sipher; and to provide entertainment for Sd. schoolmaster during sd. six months; and also to provide place or places for the school to be kept in (sic)."

Mr. Joshua Townsend of Brookfield was hired at an annual salary of eighteen pounds, or approximately \$35 plus lodging. Mr. Townsend taught in three different locations in Westborough each year — two months at each site — over a period of twelve years. The classes were held in private homes at first, but after 1744, small outbuildings or sheds were used as schoolhouses.

In 1753 Westborough was called before General Court and fined for not providing a grammar school for its town, then made up of over 100 families. It was not until 1765, however, that the town was divided into six squadrons or school districts. The number of districts was increased

BY-LAWS

FOR PROTECTING FROM INJURY

The School House in Westborough District No. 1, And all its Appurtenances.

1. This House shall be used exclusively for Schools, meetings of the District, and any committees belonging to the District.
2. It may be used for Select or Private Schools; the person occupying it, paying a reasonable rent, and being accountable for all damages that may happen during his or her occupancy; the rent and damages to be assessed by the clerk and prudential committee.
3. It shall be the duty of the Prudential Committee to employ some suitable person to take charge of the house, make the fires, and open and close it, at such times as shall be required; for which services, he shall allow such compensation as shall be requisite.
4. Every Teacher of the public school in District No. 1, male or female, shall carefully observe whether any injury is done to the School House, or any property belonging to the District immediately connected with the house; and ascertain, if possible, who did the injury, and report the same to the prudential committee: and every scholar, or the parent or guardian of such scholar, shall be held responsible for all damages done by him or her to the house, or any thing pertaining thereto; and all such damages shall be assessed by the clerk and prudential committee; and it shall be the duty of the prudential committee to collect the same.
5. The scholars shall be limited in their amusements to the public play grounds, and it shall be considered an offence for them to enter the fields, lands, or orchards of private owners, for any purpose, without consent from the owners.
6. In addition to the general supervision of the house and its appurtenances, it shall be the duty of the Prudential Committee to make all necessary repairs of injuries done to the house, or any thing pertaining to it, and make an accurate and detailed report upon the condition of the house and appurtenances, at the meeting of the District, to be held on the third Monday in February annually; specifying the items of cost expended upon them, and the damages done to them during the year; and all monies paid out by him for repairs shall be remitted as soon as may be by the District.
7. The House shall be opened for the admission of scholars but half an hour before the commencement of the school in the morning; and be closed as soon as the teacher leaves at night: the individual having the care of the house being held responsible for the safe-keeping of the key, and not allowed to give it up, except by the direction of the teacher or prudential committee.
8. In the use of the School House and out-buildings, the males shall occupy the east, and the females the west side exclusively.
9. These regulations shall be printed; and it shall be the duty of the prudential committee to see that copies shall be kept posted up in both rooms and entries of the house, and shall furnish a copy to each teacher, and also to each family in the District.

*Adopted at a legal meeting of the
District, Nov. 26, 1847.*

JONAS LONGLEY, Clerk.

— National Era Print, Worcester. —

to eight in 1789. These district schools served the town until the early 1900s. The townspeople were assigned to districts according to the location of their homes, and each school was financed by those living in that district. Besides the three-member school committee chosen by the town, district prudential committees were selected to provide wood for their one-room schoolhouse and generally maintain the school facilities.

The first Center School, District #1, was built on the south side of West Main Street near the corner of South Street in 1795. In 1823 this school was attached to the Thomas Rice house on 115 West Main Street, and



District #7 Schoolhouse, corner of Fisher St. and Otis St.
Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.



District #2 Schoolhouse, 196 E. Main St.
Photo by Paula Skog.

a brick Center School was erected next to Memorial Cemetery on West Main Street. This building was used as a school until 1849 when it was sold as a store to George Denny and John Fayerweather. In 1927 it was razed to make room for a new savings bank.

The other district schoolhouses were located at: Gilmore Hill on East Main street (#2), the corner of Flanders Road and Washington Street (#3), near the reservoir at the end of Bowman Lane (#4), in the angle between South and Warren Streets (#5), West Main Street near Adams Street (#6), the corner of Fisher and Otis Streets (#7), and the corner of Oak and Woodman Streets (#8). The only brick district schoolhouse still standing is the

District #2, now a home at 196 East Main Street. Other schoolhouses have been incorporated into residences at 47 Oak Street, 5 Washington Street, and 115 West Main Street.

According to the writings of Lucy Pond (1839-1937), a longtime Westborough teacher who attended these schools in the mid-1800s, the schools themselves were very small, one-story brick or wooden buildings heated by a box stove, which the big boys kept well-stocked. Long desks were situated on both side of a middle aisle. The pupils, ages 5 to 15, sat on benches according to size, the smallest in the front.

Classes stood during the recitation and were expected to line up precisely along a crack or line in the floor ("toe the line") to recite. Basic reading, spelling, and arithmetic were the core of the curriculum, and the children strove for fine penmanship with goose quills as they laboriously wrote their lessons in copybooks. Since each pupil supplied his or her own textbooks, often a wide disparity in lessons was seen. Slates were used for figuring arithmetic problems, but some teachers might use a portable board, painted black, to illustrate the lesson.

There was a summer and a winter term, each two and a half months long, but many of the Westborough children were expected to work on the family farm in the summer and therefore attended only the winter session. The schoolteacher was required to be versatile, learned, and capable of maintaining order while teaching up to forty scholars of varying ages, grades, and abilities. For such valiant efforts teachers received the average salary of \$25 a month, including board. The teacher, usually a single woman, was boarded out to a local family who agreed to provide the teacher with a room and meals for a fee from the town, usually \$22 monthly. Both the teacher's and the pupils' accomplishments were judged by the School Committee and parents on Examination Day at the close of the term. On this day each child would be questioned closely by either the Committee or teacher to determine the extent of his or her learning.

In 1840 a group of learned Westborough citizens formed the Westborough School Association to bring education to young men and women wishing to further their knowledge beyond the scope of the district schools. They opened a Seminary for Young Ladies in April 1840 in the Wesson Tavern on the northern corner of Park Street and the Boston-Worcester Turnpike. Under the direction of the principal Miss Hannah Brigham and her sister Miss Maria Brigham, the seminary offered courses in English, Latin, Greek, French, and music to about forty-five young women. The students came not only from Westborough, but from Framingham, Sutton, and even Lafayette, Indiana. They boarded in private homes for a fee of \$1.50 to \$2 a week. The fourteen-week terms began

in April, August, and December, and tuition was \$6 per term for the basic English branch. Studies in Latin, Greek, music, and French were available for additional fees. The Westborough School Association also administered a male seminary designed to prepare young men for teaching, business, or college.

The seminary operated for about twelve years and was then sold to Dr. John H. Hero, who turned the old Wesson Tavern into Dr. Hero's Willow Park Water Cure. In the fall of 1867 Dr. Hero decided to once again use the tavern for a school for girls and opened the Willow Park Seminary for the physical and mental training of young women. Young men were added in 1872 to the seminary. The Willow Park Seminary lasted nine years, until 1876, and stressed "right living" as much as clear reasoning. The school offered ancient and modern languages, music, elocution, and gymnastics to build a sound mind in a healthy body. The Wesson Tavern was later purchased by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to be used as a correctional cottage for the State Reform School and was razed in 1950.

DR. HERO'S SCHOOL FOR YOUNG LADIES. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FOURTH YEAR.



FACULTY.

Miss HELEN M. FREEMAN, *Principal*.
Teacher of Mental and Moral Philosophy, English Compositions, Rhetoric and Botany,

WATSON E. RICE,
Professor of Physiology, Latin, Mathematics, and Elocution.

Miss SUE A. LONGWELL, *English*
Teacher of French, ~~German~~, Oil Painting, Pencil and Crayon Drawing.

Miss KATIE D. DEMIS,
Teacher of Instrumental Music.

Mrs. A. C. ROWELL,
Teacher of Vocal Music.

DR. J. H. HERO,
Conductor of Physical Exercises.



**High School (c. 1870, ell c. 1854) and
Maynard Grammar School (c. 1876), School St.**

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

In 1854 the first public high school in Westborough was built on Science Hill on School Street. For the sum of \$54.55 a month, its first teacher, Silas Stone, taught more than twenty subjects, ranging from Greek and rhetoric to astronomy and surveying. At first all the grades were combined, but in 1870 the High School became graded and two courses of study, classical and English, were offered.

Lucy Pond, member of the class of 1855, wrote about the original High School, "The two porches on either side of the building were pleasant places on which to congregate on rainy days. The porch on the southeast side was for the girls, that on the northwest side for the boys. And it was an unwritten law that never the twain shall meet."

"It was pleasant on a warm spring day to sit out under the pine trees in small groups, pretending, at least, to study. It was pleasant in winter time to have Ruggles Pond so near on which one could skate at noon and—if the teachers were kind—at recess time. In the Grammar School (built beside the High School in 1876) a flag was put out the window as a signal to the skaters that five minutes only remained before the last bell: a chance to race across the fields and up the hill."

The independent elementary school district system was absorbed by the town in 1867, but the district schoolhouses continued to be operated by the town. There were several schools in the center of town to accommodate Westborough's downtown population: the Center School on West



**Curtis and Forbes
Grammar Schools,
Grove St., razed 1906.**

*Courtesy of
Westborough Historical Society.*

Main, the Curtis and Forbes Schools on Grove Street, and the High Street School, which was built to allow children living east of the railroad to attend school without having to cross the tracks.

The supervision of the schools had become too demanding a job for the School Committee or prudential committees to handle alone, so the first superintendent of schools, T. Dwight Boscoe, was appointed in March 1873. To accommodate all of Westborough's scholars in the seventh and eighth grades, the Maynard Grammar School was built beside the High School on School Street in 1876.

A model brick schoolhouse — with steam heat and four large classrooms able to hold fifty pupils each — was built in 1883 on Phillips Street under the supervision of Dr. Edwin B. Harvey. Dr. Harvey served on the School



Harvey School, Phillips St., built 1883.

Courtesy of Catherine Cushing.



Eli Whitney School, Grove St. built 1906 (now the YWCA).

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

Committee and as superintendent of schools from 1887-1890. As a state senator he introduced a bill in 1884, which became law, to provide free textbooks for schoolchildren of Massachusetts.

The two old school buildings on Grove Street were torn down to make room for the Eli Whitney School, which opened on the site in 1906. At this time grades one and two were assigned to the Harvey School on Phillips Street, and grades three through six attended the Eli Whitney School. Those continuing their education went to the Maynard Grammar School for the seventh and eighth grades and then on to the High School.



Forbes High School in the 1950s.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

Children living a distance from the center of town rode the "school barge," a covered wooden wagon drawn by one or two horses. The "barge kids" spent many cold hours on the road and were known to carry a hot baked potato from home to warm their hands in the mornings. Children within walking distance went home for lunch, but the barge kids carried their lunches with them to eat at school.

In 1900 there were 853 children enrolled in Westborough schools, including eighty-three over age fifteen and ten under age five. The \$13,060 spent annually to educate these children averaged \$17.52 per pupil. To ease the burden of school transportation, the General Court passed a law that year requiring the street railroad companies to issue half-fare tickets to schoolchildren living near the trolley lines. The scholars living far out along Route 30 or on Hopkinton Road enjoyed a trolley ride to school and delighted in ringing the bell and befriending the conductors.

In the 1920s Frank and Fannie Forbes recognized the need for a new High School. They decided to build one in the center of town, on the corner of West Main Street and Parkman Street, where the Whitney House had burned down in 1907. The Forbes High School, with fourteen classrooms, was built and presented to Westborough in 1926. It boasted the latest in laboratory, gymnasium, manual arts, and home economics facilities. With the new gymnasium, physical education was introduced into the school system for the first time in 1926. The old school buildings on School Street were torn down. The Forbes School was used as a combined High School and Junior High until 1956; as a Junior High School alone until 1968; and finally housed sixth grade and some kindergarten classes until it was closed in 1981 to be renovated as police headquarters.



Armstrong Elementary School, West St., built 1952.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

The town's school population and demands grew steadily. After World War II, school overcrowding forced elementary classes to be held not only in the Harvey and Eli Whitney Schools, but also at the High School and the Keating Building of Bay State Abrasives. In 1952 the Armstrong School on West Street was opened, the first publicly built school in Westborough since 1906. This modern facility, with its intercom system, all-purpose gymnasium/cafeteria, and twelve classrooms to house grades one through six, was designed to hold 360 pupils. All elementary students beyond walking distance were assigned to the new school so that they might take advantage of the new hot lunch program.

This new elementary school was named for J. Harding Armstrong (1882-1951), superintendent of schools and principal of Westborough High School from 1924 to 1947. Dr. Armstrong had graduated from Harvard and taught in Brookline before coming to Westborough in 1924. Learning of the construction of the Forbes High School, he applied successfully for the job as principal of this "modern" facility. Over the two decades that he served Westborough, Dr. Armstrong earned the respect of the community for kindness, discipline, and dedicated service.

To accommodate the growth in school population, a new High School was built on Fisher Street in 1956 for \$1,560,000. It had thirty rooms to house 600 pupils and featured science and language laboratories, a modern



Westborough High School, West Main St., built 1968.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.



Annie Fales with class in 1890.

Courtesy of Ella Wilson.



Fales Elementary School, Eli Whitney St., built 1963.

Photo by Paula Skog.

gymnasium, as well as special facilities for art, industrial arts, and home economics.

The continued swelling of numbers of schoolchildren mandated the building of the Fales Elementary School on Eli Whitney Street in 1963. With twenty-one classrooms costing \$905,000, this school was named for Annie E. Fales, a beloved school teacher who had spent most of her fifty-year teaching career in Westborough. Moving to Westborough in 1874 at age seven, Annie Fales graduated from Westborough High School in 1885 and from Worcester Normal School in 1887. She began teaching in Westborough at the District #8 schoolhouse. Later she taught sixth grade and served as principal of the Eli Whitney School until 1937. She lived at 58 West Main Street for many years and, upon her death in 1972 at age 104, was respected not only as a fine teacher but as the town's oldest resident. "Patience, a sense of humor and a real love of children—that's what makes a good teacher," she maintained in an interview on her 95th birthday.

The 1960s and 1970s brought tremendous change in the Westborough school system. The total enrollment jumped from 1,376 in 1957 to 1,801 in 1961. The School Facilities Committee, then a permanent body, recommended building a new High School on West Main Street and converting the existing High School into a Junior High. Built on the site of the home of the town's first settler, Thomas Rice, and the setting for the 1704 capture of the Rice boys by Indians, the High School now occupies thirty acres in the heart of the town. It was built in 1968 at a cost of \$3,850,000 to house 1,000 students. The High School's facilities allow a broad curriculum to be offered, ranging from Russian Soviet history and psychology to computer science and advanced placement chemistry.

Dr. Edward Kelleher, superintendent of schools since 1966, remembers, "With the new High School we wanted to build a good school system and bring the curriculum up into the 20th century. We added modern sciences to the curriculum, revamped the mathematics courses, and updated the home economics and industrial arts courses to include basic knowledge of electric wiring, soldering, technical drawing, and consumer skills."

During the 1950s and 1960s, the National Education Defense Act stimulated advances in math, science, and foreign language curriculum, and Westborough was able to benefit from new science equipment and language labs for its High School.

The team-teaching concept was introduced in 1967-1968 to the elementary grades. "I found self-contained classrooms with seats bolted to the floor when I came here," notes Kelleher. "Instead of having a teacher struggling to reinvent the wheel with thirty-eight kids of different IQs and the teacher in the next room doing the same thing, we restructured the system to be more homogeneous. Reading, language, and mathematics were grouped homogeneously, while classes for social studies, science, and the arts would continue to be heterogeneous. Teachers under a grade team leader would pool their resources, share ideas, and teach their strengths."

The twenty-eight room Hastings Elementary School was designed for the team-teaching concept and was built in 1970 at a cost of \$2,030,000. It included folding room partitions, teacher planning rooms, and classrooms arranged in quadrangles for grades K-4. Westborough's first public kindergarten was offered at Hastings School in 1970 as well.

Hastings Elementary School was dedicated to Miss Elsie A. Hastings, a lifelong resident and well-known teacher in the Westborough school system. Elsie Hastings was born in 1870 and graduated from Westborough High School in 1889, the valedictorian in her class of seven. She graduated from Worcester Normal School in 1894 and began teaching in Westborough's District #4 schoolhouse on Upton Road. After teaching



Hastings Elementary School, E. Main St., built 1970.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

at the High Street School and the Harvey School, she taught fifth grade at the Eli Whitney School until her retirement in 1937.

The elementary pupils in grades 1-4 who had been attending school in the town center were transferred to the Hastings School. The Fales School, restructured for team teaching, also housed grades 1-4. Armstrong School became the home of the fifth grade and the Forbes School the sixth, enabling courses in the upper elementary school to become semi-departmentalized.

Federal government mandates also changed the complexion of Westborough's schools. Chapter 622, the Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Act, demanded that Westborough integrate boys and girls in all its mandated programs. From 1974 on both sexes began to study industrial arts and home economics together in the Junior High and share most activities such as tag football, weight-lifting, soccer, and gymnastics at all grade levels. Girls' varsity athletics also increased at the high school level with volleyball, field hockey, cross-country, basketball, softball, gymnastics, and in 1983, soccer. Intramural sports programs for both boys and girls were instituted on all levels, from grades 1-8.

Chapter 766 required that children with special needs and those who were perceptually handicapped be identified early through testing and core evaluations and that they receive public education from age three to twenty-one. In response to this mandate, Westborough has increased its special education teachers so that each school has professionals to give attention to children with learning disabilities or difficulties in speech,

reading, and/or mathematics. The guidance department has also been expanded to focus on college advising, psychological and social adjustment at all grades, and job opportunities and career exploration with the help of a Mois computerized program.

To meet the needs of students seeking vocational training, Westborough joined the Assabet Vocational Region in 1967 with Southborough, Northborough, Marlborough, Hudson, and Boylston. Through the cooperative efforts of these towns, the Assabet Valley Vocational High School was built in 1970. Westborough students may claim 13.5% of the school's enrollment based on its town population. Westborough sends on the average thirty-five students each year to Assabet to be trained in fields ranging from automobile mechanics and carpentry to commercial art and culinary management.

The Assabet Valley Special Education Collaborative was established in 1976 by eleven area school districts. These school districts pool resources to share facilities for special education pupils, cooperate on transportation to these facilities, sponsor an alternative high school, and offer a summer program for enrichment. The Project Challenge summer program held at Hastings School excites young minds with a variety of classes such as computers, ecology, and theater arts.

Westborough schools joined the computer age in 1980 when its high school business department acquired TRS80 microcomputers through a federal grant. Other microcomputers were added for the high school math and science curriculum, and in spring 1983, Data General presented the Westborough High School with an Eclipse S140 mainframe computer with twelve terminals. By 1983-1984, each elementary school had five Apple microcomputers to familiarize pupils with the computer's capabilities.

Although the town has grown industrially in the 1970s and 1980s, its school population has grown relatively slowly. In 1973 residents voted down a proposal for a Junior High addition at one of the largest special town meetings on record. Since then the school population has declined, so much that Forbes School was closed in 1981. Its fifth grades were incorporated into Fales and Hastings Schools, with Armstrong School housing the sixth grade. The total school population in 1983-1984 is 2,396 in grades K-12, with 760 students attending the High School. The 1983-1984 budget of \$7,042,000, an average of \$2,652 per pupil, has been pared to reflect the fiscal conservatism demanded by Proposition 2½, the state legislation passed in 1981 that established a 2½% cap on the growth of municipal taxes each year.

Westborough adults have been given the opportunity to pursue an education beyond high school through college extension courses offered

in town. In 1979 Fisher Junior College began renting the Westborough Junior High School annex to operate courses in its continuing education evening division. When the Forbes Building was renovated in 1982, Fisher Junior College began renting its second floor classrooms from the town and transferred its activities to this West Main Street site.

Worcester State College has taken advantage of Westborough High School computer facilities by offering evening computer courses there since 1981. Central New England College, a school with a strong business orientation, began offering courses in Westborough in 1982 and is erecting a building for its Westborough campus on a fifteen-acre site in the Westborough Industrial Park.

In Westborough approximately 75% of the High School graduates continue their education, and now residents of all ages can join them in pursuing a college degree within the borders of Westborough.

School Superintendents

	Term
T. Dwight Boscoe	1873-1874
John E. Day	1874-1875
Henry Whittemore (High School principal)	1875-1883
Dr. Edwin B. Harvey (School Board chairman)	1884
James Burrier	1885
Dr. Edwin B. Harvey (School Board chairman)	1886-1889
A. W. Tirrel (School Board chairman)	1890
D. P. Cilley (School Board chairman)	1891
True W. White	1892-1895
H. C. Waldron	1896-1912
Earle E. Wilson	1913-1915
B. Holmes Wallace	1915-1916
Thomas S. Grindle	1917-1923
J. Harding Armstrong	1924-1947
Garland B. Russell	1947-1948
Charles M. Robinson	1949-1966
Dr. Edward E. Kelleher	1966-present

Westborough Public Library

Books—and the leisure to read them—were scarce commodities in Westborough's early years. Literary interest and study focused mainly on religious texts. Books themselves were so costly and rare that only by pooling resources could the literate citizen hope to enjoy a variety of volumes.

In 1731 Benjamin Franklin founded America's first subscription library,

but it wasn't until 1773 (according to Reverend Parkman's diary) that Parkman's son Breck met in the home of Lieutenant Joseph Baker at 115 West Main to form a cooperative library society. As was the custom for such societies, the members' dues were used to buy books that could then be borrowed by the subscribing members at no charge.

The shelves of Breck Parkman's store on Main Street held the town's first library collection. Parkman's knowledge of bookbinding enabled him to maintain the collection both in repairing old volumes and binding new ones, such as music books created by his patrons. Harvard-educated Breck Parkman, and later his son Charles, served the town over sixty years in the role of shopkeeper/librarian.

In 1807 the need to revitalize the library society and its collection resulted in the formation of the "Union Library Society." David Warren was chosen president; Charles Parkman, clerk; and Breck Parkman, librarian. The membership fee ranged from \$5.50 to \$15 a year; operating funds were also raised by the \$.25 dues at the five meetings a year. An annual non-member borrowing fee was set at \$2.

By the time of Charles Parkman's death in 1834, an expanding number of merchants and manufacturers in town were keenly interested in the self-education offered through books and lectures. In 1838 Breck Parkman's son-in-law, the Honorable George Denny, organized forty-six other citizens into the Mechanics Association to promote learning and support a library.



Home of Nahum Harrington, 54 W. Main St., c. 1818.

Photo by Paula Skog.

A fund was established to buy books with Denny contributing \$40 and the others fifty cents each. Squire Nahum Harrington, recognized as the town orator and local justice, was named librarian. He moved the book collection to his small office in the yard of his home at 54 West Main Street. Many of the books purchased by the Mechanics Association concerned industry and the trades; by 1849 there were 470 volumes with 200 of them donated by George Denny.

By 1855 the collection has been moved to the Arcade Building (second meeting house) on Main Street. Membership in the Mechanics Association had dwindled so that the year's income of \$4 did not cover the librarian's \$6 annual wage. The Association's book collection was turned over to the Town of Westborough in 1857, and the volumes placed in the Fayerweather store next to Memorial Cemetery on West Main Street. Overseeing the library's welfare was the first Board of Library Trustees made up of Reverend Luther Sheldon, Reverend William Walker, and Samuel Griggs.

The remodeling of the Town Hall in 1867 provided a permanent home for the Westborough Public Library. The Library was officially opened in 1868 on the first floor of Town Hall with Miss Jane Beeton as librarian. The Library was open to all citizens every Saturday from 1-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m., but later these hours were changed to every Wednesday during business hours. Each of the books bore a list of the library regulations, such as: "No person shall take more than one book at a time, and no family more than two," and "No person unknown to the Librarian can take books unless properly vouched for."

The library collection and its circulation grew steadily; in 1889 the collection numbered 8,165 volumes. Under the supervision of Miss Mattie Eastman the doors were open from 1-8:30 p.m. daily. Gladys Ainsworth, town librarian from 1947-1961, remembers the Town Hall library: "The Library was a long narrow room on the lefthand side of the Town Hall's lower floor. In front there was a circulation counter with a grille—a cagelike affair—where the books were charged out. Behind that were the books, but not as many as compared to today. There was a reading room for adults in the back, but I don't think children were allowed to go into it."

By the turn of the century the pressing need for greater library space was evident. In 1908 a handsome building, designed as a granite monument to learning, was built on the west corner of Parkman and West Main Streets. Most of the \$44,860 cost for building and equipping the Library was financed by private donation.

Upon its public opening on June 24, 1908, the Library was described in these glowing terms, "The principal entrance from Main Street is up



Westborough Public Library, built 1908.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

a broad flight of stone steps, through a vestibule wainscotted in marble and floor laid in colored mosaics, thence through a staircase hall into the delivery hall of ornamental design, which occupied the center of the main building. A heavy cornice of quartered oak extends around this room. Decorated panels ornament the walls, and fluted columns mark the entrance to the reading rooms on the right and left of the delivery desk. . . ."

"The stack room in the rear of the delivery desk is of fireproof construction, and separated from the main building by large metal covered sliding doors. The floor is of glass, supported on a steel frame. The walls are faced with brick and enamel. Metal book stacks, iron stairs, and book lift unite to make the stack room thoroughly modern in every particular. . . The second story is a lecture hall that will seat eighty people, an art hall for the exhibition of pictures, a study room and a Trustees' room."

In 1908 the book collection numbered 13,000 with an annual circulation of 32,055 and budget of \$1,989. Miss Ainsworth notes, "As you went in, the right side of the Library was the reading and reference room for adults, the left side was for children, and the stacks were always open. There weren't many programs, but the Librarian Abbie Judd gave good book reviews. Later when I was librarian I ran special reading programs for children. The Library stayed more or less the same for many years since the town didn't grow and the readers were the same."

Westborough's growth in the 1960s did impact the Public Library,

however. Demand for expanded services resulted in the children's library being moved to renovated basement rooms in 1963. Upper level stacks were constructed and the third floor periodical rooms opened four years later. By 1978 library circulation had jumped to 105,646 annually and Westborough library card holders numbered 8,381, but there was no corresponding increase from the original 7,500 square feet of library space. The old building was handsome but impractical, with public services spread out on five levels.

The space dilemma had been partially solved by the donation of a Bookmobile in 1976 by Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Borgatti of Shrewsbury. This library-on-wheels brought books to patrons in the four corners of town, to apartment complexes and elderly housing. The Bookmobile was in operation until 1980 when mandated budget cuts forced its demise.

Town Meeting in 1977 recognized the serious need for an expanded library facility when it funded design and development plans for an addition on the existing site. The 1978 Town Meeting voted \$1,210,582 to build a two-story addition that would centralize library services to two floors accessible by ramp and elevator. The new Library Addition, which increased the building to 20,076 square feet, was dedicated in February 1981.

According to Stan Haney, Library Director from 1975-1984 who helped design the new facility, the intent of the library building committee was to combine "the best of the old with the best of the new." The library



Westborough Public Library with addition, built 1981.

Photo by Paula Skog.

addition was planned around two central imperatives: ease of use and no increase in staffing. These goals were met by the two-level design that placed library staff in a position to serve and supervise large areas of floor space.

"The biggest change in direction since the opening of the addition has been the increase in programming," says Haney. "The first Literary Evening series, held in the fall of 1983, brought to the library such notable authors as Nicholas Gage, Robert Cormier, Westborough native Elizabeth Towne Segel, and the photographer B. A. King. The library also sponsors popular film series, puppet shows, seminars, and lectures on a variety of subjects from ecology to personal investments."

"The library has clearly become a multi-dimensional service agency. In the spring of 1984 the library advanced another step when it offered the services of an Apple IIe microcomputer to the public at no charge. The library must be more than just a warehouse for books," states Haney. "It must be recognized as a cultural and intellectual force in the community."



Capt. Nathan Fisher House, 58 South St., c. 1800.

Photo by Paula Skog.

The Westborough Post Office

A small office, now incorporated into the residence at 58 South Street, served as the first official Post Office in Westborough. It was established

on March 6, 1811 with Nathan Fisher as the first postmaster. When Silas Wesson assumed the postmaster duties in the 1820s, he moved the Post Office to his Wesson Tavern, a stagecoach stop at the northwest corner of Park Street and the Boston-Worcester Turnpike. This Wessonville office was the town's only Post Office until 1832, when Charles Parkman established a post office in his village store in the town square.

After the railroad directed the center of activity to the heart of Westborough in 1834, the downtown central office became the only Post Office in town. Its location shifted frequently, however, around the town square. In the 1840s the Post Office was located in the Cobb Block on the corner of Milk and West Main Streets, and in the 1850s it was moved to the Central Block on the corner of South and West Main Streets.

The Westborough Post Office found itself in a swirl of abolitionist frenzy in April 1860 when the local postmaster was accused of harboring sympathy for the South. An angry mob gathered before the Post Office and demanded that the postmaster, Josiah Brigham, raise the Union flag before the Post Office door. When he refused, one of his friends hastily nailed the flag to the doorpost to avert any further public uproar. Since postmasters were political appointees, national politics often disrupted the normal activity of local post offices. As the political tides in Washington turned, they affected the appointment of the local postmaster—a new



Post Office Block (center), built 1869.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

Republican administration quickly displaced a Democratic postmaster, and vice versa.

In 1869 the Westborough Post Office finally settled in the new Post Office Block on the south side of West Main Street. The corresponding increase in mail service reflected the town's growth during this period. In 1849 there was one mail delivery and one departure each morning; the annual Post Office income was \$400. In 1869 the mail had increased to three arrivals and three departures daily. By 1889, aided by increased train service, there were twenty-two mails a day, eleven in and eleven out, with an annual income of \$8,000.

The Westborough Post Office moved in 1915 to the newly constructed Keating Building on East Main Street (currently the Bay State Recreation Building). Here it remained until Frank and Fannie Forbes in 1930 built the town an imposing new Post Office on the town square as one of their efforts to beautify Westborough. This building, now the Hickox Building, was located at the end of the railroad freight spur, so Westborough's Post Office received excellent service from the railway.

William Hogan, postmaster from 1965-1972, recalls working at this Post Office on the square: "There were at least ten mail trains a day that stopped



Keating Building — 1915.

Courtesy of Kristina Allen.



Hickox Building, formerly the Post Office, built 1930.

Courtesy of Ray Welsh.

in Westborough. Three express trains didn't stop but would throw off and pick up a mail pouch. We would hang our mail pouch on the post near the depot and a big arm on the train would catch it as it went by."

"The Westborough postal clerks had to learn the railroad distribution system to sort the mail according to the railway post offices," continues Hogan. "The clerks on the mail cars sorted our mail on the way to Worcester, Springfield, and New York. Mail to New York City would get there the next morning. A letter mailed in Westborough at 11 a.m. would be received in Framingham by 1 p.m. and delivered by 2 p.m."

"In those days we would deliver the parcel post with a three-wheel pushcart. In the winter we'd pull a sled with a big box on it to deliver parcels all over town."

During the 1930s there were three regular letter carriers who delivered mail twice a day to the houses downtown. The one RFD route was delivered by a Southborough carrier. Special delivery arrived by bicycle as depicted on stamps of that era. A Westborough high school boy made the special deliveries on his bicycle before school, at noon, and after school.

In 1950 Post Office quarters became overcrowded, and the office was moved to 35 Summer Street. James Dunne, postmaster since 1972, remembers that the Westborough Post Office served four routes in 1956. "We began using trucks instead of the train to carry the mail between cities about 1955," Dunne notes. "Before the United Postal Service was established, Fenno Carter would roll up his cart up to the baggage car at the

railway depot and deliver the post office packages to us before delivering the Railway Express packages."

The Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 established the United Postal Service as a quasi-governmental agency. Postmasters, who up to this time had been politically appointed by the Postmaster General, became civil service employees like the rest of the postal workers. The Post Offices were expected to be fiscally sound and independent under this new legislation.

In 1965 when Westborough's residential and industrial growth generated an ever increasing volume of mail, the Post Office moved to a new facility on East Main Street near the railroad bridge. Since then the responsibilities of the Post Office have increased each year. Postmaster Dunne reports, "We now have nine routes with about 400 homes on each route. There are about 700 Post Office boxes rented to businesses and individuals. Presently there are ten mail vehicles; six government trucks and four private cars used by carriers. In all, our twenty-six postal employees, working six days a week, handle close to a million pieces of mail a month."

There are currently five mail receipts and dispatches per day in Westborough, distributed to and emanating from Worcester by truck. When there was a demand for a branch Post Office, local shopping centers were recognized as centers of commercial and office activity, and Julio's shopping center was selected as a logical site. The first detached Com-



Westborough Post Office, E. Main St., built 1965.

Photo by Paula Skog.

munity Post Office (CPO) was opened in 1982 at Julio's Plaza on 18 Lyman Street. This facility offers Post Office boxes and a stamp vending machine but no postal staff. With its lease ending in 1986, the Westborough Post Office is again searching for a facility with greater space to accommodate Westborough's continued residential and industrial growth.

The Official "Ugh"

The Westborough Post Office bears as its official title "Westborough, Massachusetts." The "ugh" in Westborough has moved in and out of favor over the years as part of the town's official nomenclature. Westborough's early years favored the longer spelling; the 1832 Post Office records "Westborough" as its official name.

The town's name was officially changed to "Westboro" in 1894. This shorter version, popular with businesses and those with writer's cramp, remained on the books until 1971. Then, perhaps due to the focus on the American Bicentennial celebration and the country's historic roots, the town's name was once again changed to "Westborough." The Board of Geographical Names of the Department of the Interior approved the resumption of the original 1717 spelling and its use for federal correspondence and business. Although the shorter spelling remains evident on many letterheads and signs, the "ugh" is officially correct.

Postmasters

	Term
Charles B. Parkman	1832-1834
Charles P. Jones	1834-1835
Daniel Holbrook	1835
Charles B. Parkman	1835-1838
Milton M. Fisher	1838-1839
Wellington Hunt	1839-1847
Ethan Bullard	1847-1849
John A. Fayerweather	1849-1853
Josiah A. Brigham	1853-1861
Josiah Childs	1861-1869
Frank W. Bullard	1869-1886
Dennis D. Dinan	1886-1890
Frank W. Bullard	1890-1894
Butler W. Hero	1894-1898
John W. Fairbanks	1898-1913
Thomas H. Hackett	1913-1921
William A. Temple	1921-1935
Daniel F. Harrington	1935-1936

Thomas H. Hackett	1936-1941
Daniel F. Harrington	1941-1942
Charles H. McDonald	1942-1965
William J. Hogan	1965-1972
James H. Dunne	1972-present

The Town Hall

Since the church and state were one when Westborough was incorporated in 1717, the Meeting House became the nerve center of the town in both civil and religious matters. The first town meeting voted to build a Meeting House on Powder Hill at the top of Park Street (Lyman School) and appointed John Pratt, Thomas Newton, and Daniel Warren to the building committee.

Although the structure wasn't completed until 1724, the first public meeting was held in the unfinished Meeting House on November 4, 1720. By 1744 Westborough had grown to such an extent that thirty-seven families in the northern precinct (now Northborough) decided to break away and worship in a location closer to their homes. The remaining eighty-eight families voted 600 pounds in 1748 to build a new Meeting House in the center of town, on Main Street between Milk and Summer Streets.

This Meeting House was fifty feet long and forty feet wide; its plain



Second Meeting House, 1748-1836.
Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.



Second Meeting House as the Arcade Building, 1837-1890.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

and solid construction reflected the austerity of its Puritan builders. The first public meeting was held there in September 1749. It was to this Meeting House that the townspeople flocked to worship, to conduct town business, and in the years leading up to the Revolution, to heatedly debate the growing political dissension.

After the Revolution the town and church continued to grow. In 1801 Samuel Parkman, the minister's son and "merchant prince of Boston" gave a Paul Revere bell to the Meeting House. A town clock, made by local clockmaker Gardner Parker, was placed in the Meeting House belfry in 1806.

As Westborough's population grew and society changed, not all residents shared the common Congregational religious belief as they had when the town was founded. Those who were not Congregational chafed under the law that demanded their taxes go to support a town church and minister. The growing religious controversy culminated in the official separation of church and state on March 14, 1825.

Adding to the commotion in the Meeting House was the roar of the Boston-Worcester railroad; its tracks were laid across the square and beside the Meeting House in 1834. The Evangelical Congregational membership withdrew from the Meeting House to build their own church that year,

and the remaining Unitarians decided the building was ill-suited for worship.

In 1837 the Meeting House was sold to Luther Chamberlain for commercial use. With the first floor raised, a ground floor added, and the steeple removed, the building became an arcade with its porch opening onto small shops. In fact, it was known as the "Arcade" until it was razed in 1890; the brick building that replaced it still carries that title.

Westborough found itself in need of a Town Hall, so in 1839 a Town House was built on West Main Street near Central Street, where the present Town Hall is located. The Town Hall was raised in July 1839 and according to town records, each of the raisers were paid \$1.25 and provided with beer, cheese, and dinner. The Town Hall had a full brick basement and wooden upper story, complete with a hall and gallery. A cupola housed the town clock, but the Paul Revere bell had by this time been sold to the Baptist Church.

The committee appointed to draw up rules on the use of the Town Hall recommended the following guidelines in November 1839:

"1. A Committee of three shall be annually chosen by the town whose duty it shall be to appoint a keeper, to take care of the house, to provide fewel (sic) & oil, to tend fire and lamps, to keep the house clean & do all other appropriate duties assigned him by sd. Committee & the Committee shall fix his compensation.

2. Sd. Keeper shall open & shut the house at the request of the Selectmen for all town purposes & also at the request of the Superintending Committee at any time when not wanted by the town.

3. Sd. Committee shall permit the Hall to be used for Lectures and Discussions on Political, Scientific, Literary & Moral Subjects (without regard to sect or party distinction) & for such compensation as they shall deem necessary to defray the expence of fewel, lights, and attendance (sic).

4. The Hall may be used for Lectures & Exhibitions (approved by the Committee) where tickets are sold or admission fees paid & the rent shall be fixed by sd. Commitee. . . ."

The Town Hall became an important social and educational center for Westborough. In the 1840s and 1850s residents attended lectures here on slavery, temperance, capital punishment, the Free Soil Party, and Whig politics. After it was remodeled in 1867, the Town Hall was used as headquarters for newly established municipal departments.

The first floor of the Town Hall was divided into two side sections along narrow halls. On the left side were the bookstacks and reading room of the town library, which moved into Town Hall in 1868. The town offices were located along the right side of the building. In 1871 the newly formed

The Sensation of the Season
LITTLE OLD NEW YORK
 Town Hall, Westboro
 March 19 and 20, 1924
 Mat. Thursday at 3.30

GET YOUR EVENING RESERVED SEATS AT
The Westboro Drug Co.
 Wm. C. Blois, Reg. Phar.
 13 and 15 South St., Westboro
NOW ON SALE

COME ONE! Evenings at 8 - 35 Cents
COME ALL!
 Thurs. Mat. Not Reserved
 Adults 35c Children 10c

"COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, U.S.A."




Westborough Town Hall, 1839-1929.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

Police Department with its three constables established its headquarters at the Town Hall.

When the First District Court of Eastern Worcester was instituted in 1872, it sat for three days a week at the Westborough Town Hall. The town Fire Department also had its apparatus and engine housed in the basement of Town Hall from 1842 to 1888, when the separate fire station was built.

The upstairs auditorium was the scene of constant activity—dances, lectures, plays, minstrel shows, and high school graduations. In the early 1900s silent movies were shown each Saturday to the delight of young and old. Outside on the east corner of Town Hall was a small circular bandstand; here townspeople would gather on a summer Saturday night to hear the Westboro Coronet Band.

The political activities centered around the annual Town Meeting. Sid Aptt remembers, "Town Meetings were held on a Saturday night in March. This was done because almost everyone worked six days a week, and it was convenient for the farm population, which made up more than half of the voting public. The farm people generally came into town on Saturday afternoon, which gave them time to visit the stores and offices, allowed the women to meet on the street and visit, and gave the men a chance to get a haircut and shave in anticipation of the night's activities."

"Usually one or more of the churches would put on a ham and bean supper for a very nominal fee with the public invited. These suppers were

served around five o'clock so that those that were going could be at the Town Hall for the meeting, which started at the dot of seven."

By the late 1920s Westborough's municipal needs could no longer be met by the old Town Hall. In 1927 Mrs. Isadore Forbes donated \$35,000 toward building a new Town Hall, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Forbes also contributed \$50,000 toward the construction. The town voted \$67,500 to complete the project.

A handsome brick Town Hall was built and dedicated on July 23, 1929. According to the *Chronotype* of July 26, 1929, the Selectmen's office was



Westborough Town Hall, 1929-present.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.

on the left of the main entrance connected by glass doors to the lobby. This main office, presently the Assessors' Office, had a fireplace and a vault with a small adjoining office for the clerk. The office to the right of the main doors was occupied by the Town Clerk, Treasurer, and water and sewer departments.

The Police Department and lockup were located on the ground floor. The *Chronotype* article stated, "The police room has lockers for all members of the department, and an entrance from the east side of the building and a passage through the corridor to the court room give privacy to the necessary police business."

Sessions of the Worcester District Court were held regularly on the lower level to the rear of the Westborough Town Hall. Off the main courtroom were the judge's chambers and an office for the court clerk. The court sat here until its new courthouse was opened in 1972 on 175 Milk Street on the Lyman School property.

After the District court moved, the Selectmen's office was moved into the former courtrooms, and the Town Coordinator was installed in the judge's chambers. The police expanded into two rooms vacated by the officers of the court.

The Town Hall auditorium and Memorial Hall on the top floor were the setting of popular social and cultural events in town from 1930 to 1970. Plays, dances, and programs—sponsored by the Women's Cub, Kiwanis Club, Grange, and High School—were held here. Town Meeting was held in the auditorium until it moved to the auditorium of the new High School, from 1958 to 1968 in the Fisher Street facility and from 1968 on in the West Main Street building. In the 1970s the rear of the Town Hall auditorium was partitioned off into two small offices for the Planning Board and the Board of Health.

No. 2

KIWANIS **KAPERS**

November 25, 1937 at 8:15 P. M.
Town Hall -:- Westborough

**BENEFIT OF THE
UNDER-PRIVILEGED CHILD FUND**

Adults

-:-

Fifty cents

When it became evident that the Police Department could no longer function efficiently in its antiquated and cramped quarters, the Town Meeting of 1981 voted to renovate Town Hall into a modern police facility and to move the town offices across the street to the Forbes School building (former High School). The resulting controversy about this use of Town Hall culminated in a vote by a special Town Meeting to rescind the decision and move the Police Department to the Forbes School building instead.

According to Town Coordinator Dexter Blois, when the police were installed in their new quarters in 1982, municipal offices were rearranged in the lower level of Town Hall. "The Building Inspector, Board of Health, and District Nurses of the Assabet Valley Home Health Association moved into the former police offices along the left hall," says Blois. "On the right are the offices of the town's Accountant, Collector, Treasurer, and the computer room. Westborough first became involved in time-sharing on a computer in 1981 and in January 1984 had a Digital PDP11 on-line." On the street level on the left of the main entrance is located the Assessor's Office with the Town Clerk's office at the right side of the entrance. The offices in the auditorium now house the Recreation Department and the Planning Board.

Much of the charm of Town Hall derives from its fine craftsmanship, still evident in its wrought iron railing, stained glass skylight, and solid oak woodwork. In 1984 all town offices, except those with their own facilities, are now located in the Town Hall.

Fire Department

Fire has struck fear into the hearts of Westborough residents since the beginning of the town's settlement, but an organized system to fight fires was not established until 1830. That year Charles Parkman organized a volunteer fire company from the disbanded town military. Fifteen men signed the first Engine Company's charter and bylaws that stated, "Every member, upon the knowledge of any alarm of fire shall without delay, repair to the Engine wherever it may be and assist in removing it to the fire and in returning it to the House, and shall do the duties encombant (sic) on him as a member of this Company; upon default of which, he shall pay one dollar for the use of said Company." The Company met once a month for roll call and drill.

Captain Parkman provided a small wooden tub or hand engine that was filled with buckets and pumped by hand after being hauled by the men to the fire. The Engine Company was a private organization that received no financial aid from the town until 1839. That year the town

agreed to pay \$200 for a "Thayer Tub" if the remainder of the cost could be raised by subscription: \$288 was raised by private donation and the town appropriated the \$200.

Fire Department historian Philip Kittredge explains, "The hand tub was a small, hand-drawn tub with a leather pump inside that was worked by the men. The tub was attached to the lead hose and a suction hose might draw water from a brook nearby." The Thayer Tub served the town for twelve years, but when it refused to operate at a fire in 1850, it was replaced by a new tub, the "Chauncy," for \$946. This hand-drawn tub was used until the 1880s.

The Massachusetts legislature in 1842 passed an act establishing an official fire department in Westborough, and on April 11, 1842, the town voted to accept the proposal. The selectmen appointed a board of fire engineers, with Jonas Longley named the chief engineer. The original cost for equipping the first Westborough Fire Department was \$608.20, \$294 of which was paid by subscription. The apparatus and headquarters were lodged in the Town House built in 1839.

Jonas Longley reported to the selectmen in 1843, "The members of the department are nine engineers and thirty-five engine-men. The apparatus consists of one engine, twenty-four feet of suction-hose, 123 feet leading hose, one hose carriage, four buckets, two axes, one signal lantern, one torch, three ladders, one large tub for reservoir for water, one sled for engine, and six oil-cloths for hosemen."

A fire in 1868 burned the Parkman Store on West Main Street to the ground and alerted the town to their need for better fire fighting equipment. A steam fire engine, named the "Josiah Jackson" for the chief engineer, was purchased, and a hook and ladder carriage was constructed. In addition, the small brick and concrete reservoirs downtown, which could hold 200 hogshead of water each, were increased to a total of twelve.

The Jackson steamer served the Westborough Fire Department until 1918. "A wood fire would be built in the steamer before it left the station," explains Phil Kittredge, "and that is why they had clouds of black smoke coming from them. The steam would build up pressure to activate the pump. The steamer didn't carry any water itself." Although the steamer was horse-drawn, the hose reels were still pulled by the firemen. In the early 1870s the Fire Department consisted of one hand engine, one steamer, one hose-carriage, one hook-and-ladder truck, two hose-reels, 124 feet of ladders and 2,000 feet of hose.

There were ninety-five volunteer firemen assigned to four companies: The Chauncy Company had forty-two men, the Jackson Steamer Company had twenty men, the Rescue Hook and Ladder Company had seven-

teen men, and there were ten men assigned as Fire Police. These companies, under a foreman, reported to the five engineers. According to the regulations in 1875-1877, the duty of the Fire Police was "to respond to all alarms of fire, to take charge of and remove goods when necessary, and to see that they are properly protected." Also assisting at fires at this time was the Young America Bucket Company, an independent fire company whose twenty members commanded twenty-four buckets and fifty feet of ladders.

Several devastating fires in the early 1870s convinced the town that the water system to combat the blazes was inadequate. In 1872 the Union Block on East Main Street and the High Street School burned. The next year saw the largest fire in Westborough to that date when two business blocks on the corner of South and West Main Streets, the Eagle and Corner Blocks, were destroyed and the rest of the village threatened.



Eagle and Corner Blocks, destroyed by fire in 1873.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

The construction of the town water works in 1879 with its Sandra Reservoir, water mains, and hydrant system greatly improved Westborough's firefighting capacity. However, the small pipes feeding the hydrants on Milk Street proved insufficient when two shoe factories—Brigham and Sons and Smith, Brown and Company—along with the Catholic Church on Milk Street burned in 1886. That year the first electric fire alarm was installed in the center of town with a box at the corner of Main and South

Streets and strikers on the bells of the Baptist and Congregational Churches. Later the number of boxes was increased to seven and connected to three factory whistles as well as bellstrikers, so the fire alarm would be heard in all parts of the village. The Department's apparatus was also increased by a Gleason and Bailey hook-and-ladder truck with a landing net and fire escape.



Firemen's Muster in the square, 1880's.

Courtesy of Ray Welsh.

At this time firemen's musters became popular for participants and spectators alike and remain a Fourth of July tradition to this day. The separate companies of Westborough firefighters would compete against one another to determine the fastest to arrive at a fire. These musters were taken seriously, since they were considered tests of the firemen's skill in laying hose, activating pumpers, and rescuing victims. From 1881-1887, in fact, the Westboro Rescue Hook and Ladder Company held the United States championship in racing contests at firemen's musters.

The Westborough Fire Department was finally voted its own fire station by town meeting in 1888. The handsome brick and granite structure on the corner of Milk and Grove Streets was constructed for \$13,000. The building, forty feet by fifty feet, held the fire apparatus on the lower floor and on the second floor housed a storeroom, bath, and four spacious rooms for the fire companies. Each of the volunteer companies at the time—the Chauncy Hose Company, the Jackson Steamer Company, the



Westborough Fire Department, 1888.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

William Curtis Hose Company, and the Rescue Hook and Ladder Company – took pride in furnishing its own room with rugs, prints, and comfortable chairs.



Westborough Fire Equipment, 1888.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.



Whitney House Hotel fire — 1907.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

Westborough's new fire house was one of the most impressive of the surrounding communities, perhaps reflecting the town's industrial prosperity. At this time the Fire Department included the horse-drawn Jackson Steamer, a hook-and-ladder, a one-hose reel, and two hand-hose carriages with 5,000 feet of linen hose. There were eighty-three volunteer firemen serving under five appointed fire engineers.

The first major fire in Westborough in the twentieth century destroyed the large Whitney House in 1907. Built in 1881 by Christopher Whitney, the hotel on the corner of Parkman and West Main Streets housed shops on its first floor and hotel rooms on the upper three stories. This haven for tourists and traveling salesmen went up in a dramatic blaze, leaving a gaping hole in the town center until the town High School was built on the site in 1926.

The fire in the Foster-Richardson Bedstead warehouse on Cottage Street on May 11, 1908 leveled the building. More than 1,000 metal beds were waiting for shipment in the packing room, and the excelsior wrapping the bedsteads burned swiftly and caused dense smoke. According to the May 15 *Chronotype*, "When the fire was at its height, help was telephoned for at Worcester, and a very quick response was made, for in a short time a steamer was on board the (railroad) cars, and the run was made from Worcester to Westboro in fourteen minutes, which was decidedly quick time." This large fire destroyed not only the Bedstead's Cottage Street warehouse (the former Kimball Boot factory), but also two tenement houses owned by Foster-Richardson and the warehouse of the Armour Beef Company, around the corner at the end of Brigham Street.



The Jackson Steamer at the Armour Warehouse fire — 1908.

Courtesy of Rocco Paolini.

As the automobile age was introduced to Westborough, gas engines gradually replaced horse-drawn vehicles. The Fire Department was not to be left behind, and in 1914 it bought its first gas engine truck, a Brockway Chemical truck. According to Phil Kittredge, "This truck acted like a large soda and acid extinguisher. It had two copper tanks filled with soda and water. When the men turned a wheel on the side of the truck, acid would mix into the soda and their chemical reaction would fizz up and create the pressure to shoot the water out of the truck. This truck didn't have a pump, so the firemen had to carry spare charges, since once the water in the tank emptied, they had to fill up the water tank again, put in another charge and go through the routine once more."

Columbus Day 1917 will be remembered not as a holiday in Westborough but as the date of one of the most damaging fires in Westborough history. The conflagration wiped out a large section of East Main Street as the flames consumed buildings from Brigham Street up to the newly constructed Keating Building, now the Bay State Recreational Building. The Westborough Trunk and Bag Company occupied the large factory on the corner of Union and East Main Streets, originally constructed for the National Straw Works hat factory in 1878. Beside this was located the Hassell Lace Curtain factory. The Westboro Inn, formerly the National House boarding house for workers at the factories, was adjacent to the lace factory and also burned with the two factories.

The fire started at the Trunk and Bag and then crossed Union Street to ignite the Staples Block, which housed the Electric Light Company and



Views of the National Straw Works fire — Oct. 1917.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

two small shops. The damage was estimated in the October 19, 1917 *Chronotype* as between \$150,000 and \$200,000. The paper stated, "The first real awakening to the great holocaust was when the fire leaped across the street (Union) and set the building ablaze. The firemen knew then that they were doomed to an awful fire. . . Even then the people did not seem to realize that unless something short of a miracle occurred, the residential section of the town would be burned out as well as the factories. The miracle came in the form of a deluge of rain and a change of wind which

is undoubtedly the only thing that saved the buildings located on Summer and High Streets."

Again a stunning disaster mobilized the town to improve its inadequate fire fighting equipment. In 1918 a Maxim Triple Combination Pumper, which could pump 500 gallons per minute, was bought for \$8,240 and named the "Chauncy." This was the first truck in which the gas engine provided the mechanism to pump the water. The beginning of a new era of the Fire Department was marked in 1918 by another innovation – the first permanent full-time fireman, Edward Hogan, was hired. Hogan worked seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, with two days off a month for an annual salary of \$1,000.



Westborough Fire Department's Maxim Pumper — 1923.

Courtesy of Rocco Paolini.

Another Maxim Pumper, the "MacDonald," was added to the Fire Department in 1923. A new fire alarm system with a fire whistle sounding at the Fire Station was installed in 1934 and in the same year Westborough entered into a twenty-town mutual aid pact. Rocco Paolini, appointed the first full-time fire chief in 1969, recalls the Department in the 1930s:

"Ed Hogan lived across from the Fire Station and had the same phone number as the fire station in his house. When there was a fire, Ed would just toot the siren and go down the street, and all the call men would come running out of the stores and factories. The call men all worked in town

then, so you never had any problem getting help. At that time five call men slept upstairs at the Fire Station. These men had to be single and were expected to be there every night. If there was a still alarm (a fire not too serious), three or four firemen would go, and two would stay at the station. Ed was the only man on duty during the day, but there were always people dropping by the station."

This system continued until a second permanent fireman was added in 1943. By that time a Maxim Quad ladder truck had been purchased (1937) that combined pump and ladder on one truck.

On March 4, 1947 downtown Westborough was engulfed in flames as a fire in the old Hat Shop at 6 Phillips Street and the Westboro Underwear Factory at the corner of Milk and Phillips Streets raged out of control. "There was a time there I thought the whole town was going up," Fire Chief George Higgons told the *Boston Post*. Almost 600 employees were evacuated from the old wooden factories that housed seven companies: in the Milk Street building was Marcus Mason's wire netting company,



Hat Shop fire, Milk St. and Phillips St., 1947.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

Westboro Underwear, and Rasmussen Shoe Company; in the Phillips Street factory was Wheatley Products, which reclaimed rope for mattresses, Dennison Manufacturing, a leather company, and Shrewsbury Stamp Metal.

Fire fighter Rocco Paolini remembers, "The fire started in the first floor picking room' of the old Hat Shop in the afternoon. The factory was pretty much empty. It wasn't used for hats anymore, but in the picking room Navy hemp rope was fluffed up to use for the stuffing of automobile seats. I think a nail or piece of metal was struck, created a spark, and ignited the hemp."

Whipped by 37-mile-an-hour winds, the fire roared through the wooden structure, broke through the windows, and crossed over to the adjacent factory on the corner of Milk Street. According to the *Chronotype*, flames and smoke were sent billowing more than 500 feet and the fire could be seen for six miles. The fire burned poles and telephone wires, cutting off electricity and telephone service in Westborough for several hours. Besides the factories, a two-family home, a filling station, and three automobiles were destroyed and the diner and garages nearby were scorched.

The March 5, 1947 *Boston Post* reported, "A gasoline station directly across the street from the factory at 50 Milk Street was destroyed when the (factory) buildings collapsed to send the wave of flame rolling across the street. Witnesses said that within an hour after the fire started both the wooden factories had collapsed into red molten masses of blazing embers and melted machinery."

More than thirty fire engines from neighboring towns battled the blaze, but the antiquated Westborough system worked against them. "We had the old water system in town then," recalls Paolini "and the pipes were so tuberculin and encrusted with rust that there was only enough water for one fire truck; after that the town went dry. The Hat Shop had a sprinkler system and the Underwear Factory had a pipe on its roof to spray a curtain of water to protect it from fire in the other factory, but we didn't have the water to use them. Pumpers came in from Worcester, Shrewsbury, Marlborough — all the surrounding towns — but they had to use their booster tanks because we had no water for them. They used their water to sprinkle the roofs of the houses nearby to protect them from sparks. We had only two lines on that fire, and one was protecting the house between the factory and the Fire Station. If we had had another big fire downtown, that would have been the end of Westborough. Without the water, we were licked."

The fire was described in the April 1947 *Fire Engineering Magazine* in an article entitled, "Delayed Water Improvement Results in Big Westboro

Fire." The article stated, "Firemen were handicapped from the start by a poor water supply. The problem of water supply has long been a controversial subject in town. The now-retired Fire Chief William Blois had for years carried on a relentless campaign for an improved water system; many times in town meeting he had predicted just such a disaster as occurred."

"Late last year he finally succeeded in having an appropriation of \$380,000 passed for the installation of an additional high pressure reservoir, new large size mains, and high pressure type hydrants. He was named chairman of the committee to carry out the project, and ironically, the material and equipment for the job had already been delivered at the time of the fire."

Without adequate water and pressure to supply numerous fire hoses, the fire burned until the next morning. Even after it had burned itself out, firemen poured water on the smoldering heap of ashes for days. The intense heat had blistered paint on cars 300 yards away, shattered windows, and scorched nearby buildings, including the Fire Station fifty yards away. The damage was reported in excess of \$500,000, but fortunately no lives were lost.

In 1953 a third permanent fireman was added, but the first full-time fire chief was not appointed until 1969. Until that time the Fire Department had been organized under a board of five engineers appointed by the selectmen and part-time fire chiefs.

Since the installation of the pump-fed water tank off Route 9 on Newton's Hill in the 1960s, a high pressure water system has been used in town. The higher the level of water in the tank, the more pressure in the system—five pounds of pressure for every eight feet of water. This system, identified by its yellow hydrants, can deliver 125 pounds of pressure to the center of town.

The apparatus was improved by the addition of an aerial ladder truck equipped with hand and power tools in 1969. To handle the town's growing demands, the Fire Department expanded to add three more permanent fire fighters in 1972 and another three in 1976. A 750-gallons-per-minute pumper truck was also purchased during this period.

The town ambulance service was put under the Fire Department's jurisdiction in 1975, and two bays were added to the station to accommodate the ambulance. Currently the Fire Station houses two ambulances, a 1977 and a 1983 model. Members of the Fire Department are all trained as Emergency Medical Technicians, and as such, answer ambulance calls, usually paired with a Westborough Police EMT. About 50 percent of the

calls for the Fire Department are ambulance calls, a total of 705 out of the 1,241 calls in 1983, for example.

Fire Chief James Parker comments, "We have three pumpers now: a 1981 that can pump 1,250 gallons per minute, and two pumpers that handle 750 gallons per minute. We also have a brush fire truck that we converted from a 1952 Dodge power wagon to use on off-the-road brush fires. Also a rescue truck was donated in 1977 to the Fire Department by the Civic Club and other town organizations for use mainly at industrial or vehicle fires."

The rescue truck is equipped with chains, winches, chisels, axes, ram bars, power tools, plus a gas generator for emergency lighting. One of the most important pieces of equipment is the "Jaws of Life" donated in 1978 through the combined efforts of Westborough community groups. This apparatus is used in industrial and vehicle accidents to pry open car doors and release jammed machinery.

Since March 1975 Explorer Post 85 has acted as the Fire Department Auxiliary. Under the direction of Bill Tashjian the young men are trained in first aid, search and rescue methods, and fire assistance.

"There are fourteen full-time firemen plus the Chief," explains Chief Parker. "They are divided into three-men shifts with one additional person on days. On a rotation basis, they work two ten-hour day shifts and two fourteen-hour night shifts. Normally there are three call men sleeping at the fire station added to the three permanent men on night duty. Presently we have seventeen call men but are allowed twenty-four. All the call men live in town, but it's different from the old days because we can't find enough call men who work in town. The call men aren't assigned to certain trucks like the old companies were," continues Parker. "Every call man has to know how to use each piece of equipment."

When the alarm signals at the Westborough fire station, the on-duty firemen must determine the size of the blaze. A small fire, a still alarm, is handled by the permanent fire fighters on duty. In a serious fire, however, the general box alarm summons the fourteen permanent firemen and the call men into action. A sequence of blasts of the fire alarm whistle alerts them to the exact location of the fire. Each call man has a home box alarm to alert him to the location of the fire, and the off-duty permanent firemen are summoned by the pager each wears.

In 1983 the Westborough Fire Department answered a total of 1,241 calls: 117 general box alarms, 418 still alarms, and 705 ambulance calls. The 1984-1985 appropriation for the Fire Department is \$460,686 plus \$20,125 for the ambulance service.

Local industry has cooperated with the Fire Department; many of the



Westborough Fire Department, 1984.

Photo by Paula Skog.

large companies, like Bay State Abrasives, maintain their own private fire departments. As the town grows commercially and industrially, the responsibility of the Fire Department grows as well. With the increased presence of plastics and chemicals in industry, the nature of fires has changed with the added hazard of toxic smoke.

The facade of the old firehouse was remodeled in 1983 when a fire truck had difficulty negotiating the narrow wooden doorway and accidentally backed into the central brick pillar. Extensive renovations were necessary, including replacing the four narrow wooden doors with two new steel doors. The 1888 structure now has a streamlined look and can accommodate the modern engines that have replaced the steam engines the building was originally constructed to house.

Fire Chiefs

The Fire Chief Engineer was elected by the five-member Board of Fire Engineers who in turn were appointed by the selectmen. The Chief Engineers listed below date from the construction of the Westborough Fire Station in 1888.

	Term
Henry L. Chase	1887-1895
James H. McDonald	1896-1913
Thomas H. Treadway	1913-1914

George E. Walker	1914-1915
John B. Crowe	1916-1918
Burt B. Brigham	1919
Thomas J. Henry	1920-1923
John B. Crowe	1924-1925
Thomas H. Hackett	1926-1929
William C. Blois	1929-1945
George Higgins	1946-1948
Winthrop W. Spinney	1948-1963
Rocco Paolini	1963-1968

A full time, permanent fire chief was first appointed by the selectmen in 1969.

Permanent Fire Chief

Rocco Paolini	1969-1973
Walter N. Perron	1973-1982
James W. Parker	1982-present

Westborough Police Department

With its origins rooted in Puritan morality and its small town respect for law and order, Westborough has escaped the overcrowding and poverty that so often give rise to violent crime. For most of its history it has been a town in which all the residents knew each other, and the threat of public disgrace was a powerful deterrent. Any strangers in town were sure to raise suspicion, and Westborough's two most sensational crimes were committed by such transients—a tavern robbery in 1737 and the "Baby Doll Murder" in 1919.

On a dark March evening in 1737, Hugh Henderson, a native of Ireland, broke into the tavern owned by Abner and Vashti Newton and stole money and goods valued at \$30. This tavern, later known as the Blue Anchor, was located on West Main Street near the present High School. The thief was caught, indicted, and thrown into the Lincoln Street jail in Worcester to await trial. Reverend Ebenezer Parkman visited Henderson in prison and heard his full confession. Although the thief begged to be allowed to return the stolen goods, the Worcester magistrates ignored his pleas. Henderson was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging on one count of burglary. For his rash act in Westborough, he was hung in the jail's courtyard on November 26, 1737. It was the first public execution by hanging in Worcester County.

More than 150 years later, in June 1919, Westborough's provincial tran-



**Harry Baker
and "Baby Doll."**

Courtesy of Glenn Parker.

quility was shattered by the brutal murder of Dwight Chapman. Chapman had worked as a gardener and handyman for Mrs. Blake at 40 South Street, and upon her death, inherited the house. A recluse, he lived in the back portion of the house and rented rooms to transients. A Mr. Harry Baker and his very attractive wife—soon nicknamed "Baby Doll"—took up residence with Chapman about ten days before the murder.

Chapman usually picked up garbage for his pigs from the Central House. When he missed this routine and was absent from his usual haunts, police broke into his room to find his battered body. Chapman's skull was smashed, and the murder weapon, a hammer, lay nearby. The safe, containing \$299, had been tampered with unsuccessfully, and the Bakers had disappeared. A hue and cry went out all over New England; the pair was finally apprehended in Bangor, Maine. Although he pleaded not guilty at first, Baker later changed his plea to murder in the second degree and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Baby Doll—her real name was Eleanor Reise—had never actually been married to Baker. The two had met in a Wisconsin prison where the woman had been sent for the attempted murder of her husband. She

O E M

By the untimely
Hugh Henderson,
Hamilton, who was
Worcester for House-
OV. 24. 1737.



By thro' different Ways they
are to be undone. (run,
Sir J. DENHAM.

James' Path leads
to the Death!
How's found Hell,
And not the same at all

But lo! the Scene no more appears,
Chang'd all to Grief, to Sighs, to Tears.
Wholly (poor Wretch !) by Sin possest,
No Spark of Grace to warm his Breast,
That all it's Paths he might pursue,
Must go and break up Houses too.
(As if his Sins were yet too light
To sink him to Hell's boundless Night !)

Broadside published at the time of the hanging.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

pleaded guilty as an accessory to Chapman's murder and spent a year in jail. Detective Thomas Humphrey, who served as police chief from 1916-1948 (with the exception of 1919—the year of this investigation) described his views on the crime in a 1929 magazine, *Master Detective*. The "Baby Doll" murder generated gossip in Westborough for years to come.

These two crimes stand out in stark relief against the customary order in Westborough's communal life. Since the town's beginnings, justice has been guarded by constables—at first elected, then appointed—who served summons, posted warrants, and generally upheld the letter of the law.

The first town constable was David Maynard, elected at the first Westborough town meeting in 1718. The new town was required by law to erect a town pound to hold animals that had strayed from the common pasture. Westborough erected a thirty-foot square pound on land that David Maynard had donated for ten years. To restrain errant humans, however, stocks were in order, and in 1723 John Pratt was paid eight shillings to build the town stocks.

By the 1730s the north section of town (later Northborough) desired to break away from the rest of Westborough. The appointment of one constable to serve both areas added fuel to the growing dissension. In 1736 first James Maynard, then Josiah Rice, declared their refusal to serve when named constable and staunchly paid the 5 pounds, as the charter dictated,

to be released from the responsibility. A constable was then chosen for each district, but the same dilemma was faced in 1740 when Westborough tried again to keep the town under the jurisdiction of a single constable. The ill feelings were not resolved until 1744 when the north district was officially set off as a separate precinct with the ability to elect its own officers.

Westborough's official law enforcement continued under the supervision of its two or three elected constables until 1871, when the town voted to establish official police regulations. The police force was organized with a night watch, an officer of the watch, and a special constable stationed at the Town Hall. It was the responsibility of the night watch to check the village for fires and robberies; for this he was paid \$2.50 a night. The special constable was paid \$324 a year, and the total police expenditure in 1871 was \$670.17.

To help the official law enforcers, some private Westborough citizens decided to try their hand as sleuths and had formed the Thief Detection Society in 1839. Their purpose was to detect thieves and recover stolen property. A detecting or pursuing committee was named to follow and capture thieves, and the directors were authorized to offer rewards. This Thief Detection Society, one of the largest organizations in town, pursued criminals for nearly fifty years. In 1887, however, its focus changed to village improvement, and the society became the Westborough Park Association.

As Westborough's commercial and residential center grew, a Citizens' Combination was formed of residents to ensure the safety of homes and businesses. In 1881 the annual report indicated that the town voted to pay half the expense incurred by the Citizens' Combination in hiring a night watchman. The next year the night watch was increased to two men, on duty from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m., each paid \$8 a week. The first night watchmen were William Magner and L. W. Green. The 1881 report also stated that "the selectmen were authorized to employ, at their discretion, an officer to patrol the streets in the immediate center of the village for the purpose of preserving order and protecting people from being insulted and annoyed by disorderly and boisterous persons who at that time gave frequent occasion for complaint."

To handle crowds and potential trouble, special police officers were appointed and assigned specific locations in Westborough as needed. Locations requiring the watchful eye of an officer were the National Straw Works, the reservoir, the poor farm, Chauncy Park, Lyman School, the millpond, the railroad station, High Street, Pine Grove Cemetery, as well as the lockup in Town Hall.

Westborough's first police chief, William Magner, was appointed in 1899. At that time the police force was comprised of Chief Magner, six special officers, and nine constables to serve warrants. The janitor of the Town Hall doubled as keeper of the lockup, which was located in the basement of Town Hall. This lockup was used to hold individuals waiting trial in the Worcester County Court, First District, which was held in Westborough's Town Hall until the new courthouse was built off Milk Street in 1972. The State Police and the neighboring towns of Grafton, Northborough, and Southborough all used Westborough's lockup until their own were built.

"In the early 1900s," Sid Aptt recalls, "the Police Department consisted of the chief and eleven constables. The chief was duly appointed by the Board of Selectmen, but the constables were elected during the annual election. Many ran for these positions, but only the eleven top vote-getters made out."

"A constable differed from an extra duty police officer because they were entitled to serve legal papers such as summons and arrest warrants, while the extra was used in the capacity of standby reserves. Neither the constables nor the extra duty police officers received a regular salary but got paid by the hour for any duty performed. A lot of income was derived from police duty at Lake Chauncy Park. The dances held there six nights a week during the summer months required four to ten police officers depending on the popularity of the dance."

Until the 1950s, there were no police cruisers in Westborough. Officers responding to a call would flag down a surprised passing motorist for a ride to the scene of a crime or accident. Later the police used their own or rented cars.

The communications system was unique—officers on duty were alerted to calls by a blue lantern at the Rotary. In the days before portable transmitters, the blue glass globe was lit to signal police directing traffic or passing in cruisers to call in. Since it was difficult to see the light on sunny days, the police directing traffic often relied on merchants around the Rotary to inform them when the blue light came on. Since the police calls went into the Fire Station in the evening, the firemen receiving a police call would switch on the blue light to summon the police on patrol. Erected in 1938, the blue police lantern remained on its post until 1974.

Significant changes did occur, however, in the Westborough Police Department in the 1950s. In 1952 the town voted to buy its first police cruiser for \$1,800. The next year a communications system was installed that was jointly used by the Police Department, Fire Department, and Civil



Police signal light which stood on the rotary.

Photo by Glenn Parker.

Defense. For years the Police Department depended on its chief and two patrol officers; a third full-time officer was added in 1954.

The Town Ambulance Service, under the control of the Police Department, went into effect in 1954 when the Stowell-Parker Post of the American Legion donated an ambulance to the town. Up to this time, ambulance calls had been made in Hip Harper's hearse, a practice not conducive to a patient's peace of mind. The year 1954 also saw the first report to break down the annual activities of the Police Department. This report indicated that eighty-eight arrests were made, thirty of them for drunkenness. The Department made 700 investigations, received over 4,000 radio and telephone calls, and answered 151 ambulance calls.

In 1947 the first police woman in Westborough, Flora Swears, was hired and soon the office of police sergeant was added to the Department. It was during the 1950s that the practice of electing constables was discontinued—all appointed full-time officers became sworn constables. Police Chief Harry Shepherd remembers, "When I first came on the force in 1960, there were four officers plus the chief and sergeant. That meant that there was only one officer on duty at the Town Hall each shift. No

one manned the Police Station from the 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. shift, so the police calls at night were answered by the Fire Department. No one was assigned to supervise the lockup in the basement of Town Hall either. The officers worked forty-eight hours a week, and six days a week."

The 1970s saw an increase in residential, commercial, and industrial growth in town and the accompanying problems of increased traffic, ambulance calls, and burglary alarm investigations. It was from 1975-1979 that the Police Department enjoyed the assistance of a Police Explorer Post. This Explorer Post was made up of high school students who learned about police work firsthand by assisting at accidents, with traffic control, and on house security checks. At the beginning of the decade there were fourteen full-time police officers, two dispatchers, and a policewoman in the Department; by 1979 the force had expanded to twenty-one full-time officers, including the new position of police lieutenant, three dispatchers, and two policewomen. There were now six cruisers, and the 1979-1980 operating budget was \$458,533.

The development of shopping centers and apartment houses as well as industrial growth in the 1970s brought particular challenges for Westborough's Police Department. Since the construction of the Massachusetts Turnpike and Route 495 in the 1960s, Westborough has gradually become a center of industrial growth. The town's population of 13,900 now more than doubles each work day with the influx of commuters. The increased traffic has created problems around the center traffic rotary during rush hour, but as yet Westborough has no traffic lights other than those on Route 9.

There is little street crime in Westborough, beyond occasional car thefts, shoplifting, and store robberies. Before the Lyman School for Boys closed in 1971, a lot of stolen cars were reported. Boys would run away from the school, steal a car in Westborough and dump it near Boston. A few days later, they would steal a car to come back and leave that stolen car in Westborough. When the Arab oil embargo pushed up gasoline prices in 1973, the number of stolen cars increased in Westborough: many of them gas guzzlers that were suspiciously burned.

The town's shopping centers and apartment complexes with their large parking lots have become high crime target areas, where the many motor vehicles, stores, and banks entice those bent on robbery. It is in these areas that the Westborough police force has concentrated on being highly visible to deter crime. With the number of banks in town increasing from two to twelve between 1977 and 1984, the local police have been called upon to do more bank escorts; that is, guarding the transportation of large sums of money from businesses to banks and from bank to bank. A grow-



**Officer Ronald Allen
with police dog Thor.**

Photo by Glenn Parker.

ing number of private burglar alarms, and the accompanying false alarms, have added to the Police Department's duties.

The Westborough police expanded its capability with a canine unit in 1976, when Thor, the Town's first police dog, joined the force. A second German Shepherd was added to the unit in 1977. Westborough police dogs and their handlers, especially Thor and his handler Officer Ronald Allen, have won recognition nationally for their tracking ability. They placed fifth in the overall national competition in 1978. The dogs have proven to be an effective tool for law enforcement. They have discovered hidden guns, apprehended suspects fleeing a crime, tracked a car thief from a scent taken in the abandoned vehicle, and searched for lost children.

The large industries, like GTE and Massachusetts Electric, that have settled in Westborough operate their own security forces, medical teams, and fire units, but they call upon the Westborough police as a backup system. These industries have also introduced to Westborough the need for crowd control in labor disputes and demonstrations. Strikes at Massachusetts Electric in 1969, 1972, 1975, and 1978, and a labor dispute

at Cumberland Farms in 1974 soon taught the local police the mechanics of crowd control. The complexity and scope of the local police's responsibilities have increased as Westborough expanded. In 1982, 1983 and 1984, for instance, Westborough was the site of large anti-nuclear peace demonstrations at GTE where the communications components for the MX missile were being built. Here again, the Westborough police played a part in assuring safety and control of the crowd.

The focus of the police has continued to be service to the community, and with the Town's relatively low crime rate, the Department is able to actively pursue its goal. Fifteen local officers are trained Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and are required to update their training as active members of the Ambulance Service. Westborough police officers also attend seminars regularly in such areas as white collar crime, drug abuse, rape counseling, stress control, crime prevention, and motor vehicle laws.

In September 1982 a new era for the Westborough Police Department began with the opening of the modern police headquarters in the renovated first floor of the Forbes Building (formerly the Forbes High School). The Department had faced severe crowding problems in its quarters in the basement of Town Hall. There were only three offices for twenty-five full-time employees and a small, antiquated lockup, from which prisoners had broken out. With no interrogation room, garage, or privacy from the day-



1982 Westborough Police Headquarters, Forbes Building.

Photo by Paula Skog.

to-day business going on at Town Hall, the Police Department faced both a security and morale problem.

The new facility has enabled the Police Department to expand from the 2,600 square feet in the Town Hall to almost 8,900 square feet at a cost of \$490,000 for renovations and \$65,000 for the attached garage. An updated communications center is equipped with ten closed circuit television, police radios, and alarm panels for local businesses and residences. From this center cruisers are dispatched, and all headquarter doors—including those of the five jail cells—can be locked and monitored. The new police garage protects cruisers from the elements and ensures that prisoners will not escape in transport. A booking area, evidence room, interrogation room, darkroom, and central records area facilitate routine police procedures. Offices for the administrators, a classroom, and a conference room make up the rest of the facility. The classroom enables state, regional, and national seminars to be held in Westborough, such as the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Training Course.

The new police headquarters has increased the Department's capability to serve Westborough's growing demands. On duty in the headquarters in 1984-85 are the police chief, one lieutenant, one detective sergeant, four patrol sergeants, fifteen patrolmen, two policewomen, and three dispatchers with an operating budget of \$613,000.

Police Chiefs

	Term
William Magner	1899-1912
James H. MacDonald	1912-1913
John P. Crowe	1913-1914
Henry J. Mooney	1914-1915
Charles H. Banks	1915-1916
Thomas W. Humphrey	1916-1919
William E. Johnson	1919-1920
Thomas W. Humphrey	1920-1949
Robert J. Higgins	1949-1969
Daniel Campion, Acting Chief	1969-1970
Harry F. Shepherd	1970-present

Department of Public Works

In Westborough the Department of Public Works was created in 1974. That year with a Town Meeting vote to revise the town's charter, the separate departments for water, sewer, highways, trees, and cemeteries were united into one. The new D.P.W., centralized under an appointed

manager and assistant manager, moved into offices at 24 Fisher Street. Until that time the individual departments, each with three to five employees, worked under elected commissioners or an appointed superintendent. The Highway Department had reported to a superintendent appointed by the selectmen, the cemetery workers to five elected Cemetery Trustees, and the Sewer and Water Departments to the Sewer and Water Commissioners, who were usually the same three men elected to both commissions. The tree warden was an elected town official.

In the ten years since its creation, the D.P.W. has expanded to a staff of thirty-one: fourteen assigned to the highways, four to the cemeteries, three to the sewer plant, four to water systems, a tree warden, and three office personnel – all reporting to the manager and assistant manager. The D.P.W. crew maintains Westborough's public works with a fleet of sixteen trucks. Demands once met by manual labor and wagon team now require an impressive array of heavy equipment, but the services performed remain basic to the town's well-being. The cost of these services in 1984-1985 was set at \$1,231,261 in the annual budget.

Westborough's growth has resulted in increasing demands on the D.P.W. and has required an expansion of the D.P.W. facilities. In 1983 Town Meeting voted \$850,000 for the construction of a new D.P.W. garage on nineteen acres at 131 Oak Street, land formerly held by the state-owned Lyman School. Consolidating all departments and equipment into one



Ray Welsh of Westborough's Highway Department, 1946.

Courtesy of Ray Welsh.



New DPW garage, Oak St., 1984.

Photo by Paula Skog.

facility, the new headquarters includes a main garage, repair shop, and office space in the 24,000-square-foot structure. The D.P.W. personnel moved into the facility from Fisher Street in June 1984, and the foremen working out of the South Street garage joined them in July.

Each of the D.P.W. departments, although now united, has made a distinct contribution to Westborough's history.

Town Highways

Transportation systems have been a crucial factor in Westborough's development, be they Indian paths, stage routes, railroads, trolley lines, or interstate highways. The first toll road for wheeled vehicles in America was constructed through Westborough in 1810, and in the nineteenth century the streets downtown became crowded with shops, hotels, and factories. The roads beyond the town center, however—a network connecting scattered farms—were quiet and rural.

In the 1800s town roads had been divided into fifteen highway districts, each maintained by a surveyor and repairman. The 1881 Town Report notes, "The manner of repairing the highways has been much the same as in the past few years, that of assigning certain sections to competent persons who are conveniently situated to care for them and to perform the necessary work of repairs."

Much of the highway work concentrated on grading and leveling the dirt roads. Fred Nichols said of the highways in the early 1900s, "All the

streets were just plain dirt. In the spring when the frost would heave, stones would come up out of the ground, why, as big as barrels. If you didn't hang onto your seat, you'd be thrown out of the wagon."

Bob Harvey remembers his grandfather working on Westborough's roads: "There were still dirt roads in Westborough in the 1920s. My grandfather would have to round off the roads with a team of horses to keep a crown so the water would run off to the sides. When it got muddy, they used a road scraper to fill in the ruts. The scraper was pulled by four horses—two in front and two in back. The men also hauled gravel and filled in the wet spots to build the roads up. In the summer they drove a horse-drawn water tank around town to sprinkle the roads and keep the dust down."

In winter clearing the snow off roads from the center to isolated farms was a major task. Fred Nichols commented, "To open roads then, a bunch of men would get on a horse-drawn sled with hand plows on the side. They'd drive until they came to drifts so big the horses couldn't plow through them; then the men would get out and shovel. The road was all broke out when the horses could get into town."

Most of Westborough's roads were not paved until after 1924 when the trolley service along the major streets was discontinued. In fact, until the 1950s the streets beyond the center of town remained comparatively unpopulated. D.P.W. manager Tom Fryer remembers, "When I joined the Highway Department in the summer of 1943, I worked on several projects to improve old dirt roads into paved roadways. There were many dirt roads in town as late as 1943-45."

"Westborough was still a rural town; a lot of the streets were country roads with only a few farms on them. Beyond the Country Club on West Main Street and beyond the railroad bridge on East Main Street there was nothing but farms. We swept the sand off the roads by hand then, and some of the rural streets never got swept. In the winter we could wait to plow some of the roads like Arch Street with no homes on them. Those days we had about 80 miles of roads to take care of, but now we have about 120 miles, and every mile is heavily populated."

Housing developments and streets to service them sprang up in Westborough after World War II. The construction of the Massachusetts Turnpike in the late 1950s and Route 495 in the 1960s opened Westborough up to further industrial and commercial development. Town roads serving the industrial zones on the east and west ends of Westborough, particularly Otis, Flanders, Walkup and Washington Streets, were widened and improved. Reflecting the high tech development in town, streets like Computer Drive and Research Drive were constructed in the 1980s. With

the fast-paced industrial growth, traffic has become one of the most persistent problems to face Westborough residents.

Town Sewer System

Westborough's continuing development led to sewer problems as far back as the 1870s. As stated in the 1876 Town Report the old storm drains were "not sufficient for the discharge of surface waters and discharges from water closets, kitchen sinks, and manufactories. We believe the elements of growth and prosperity of the Town require increasing the means for the removal of filth as well as the drainage of streets and cellars." Accordingly, new storm drains with manholes and catch basins were constructed in the town center in 1877.

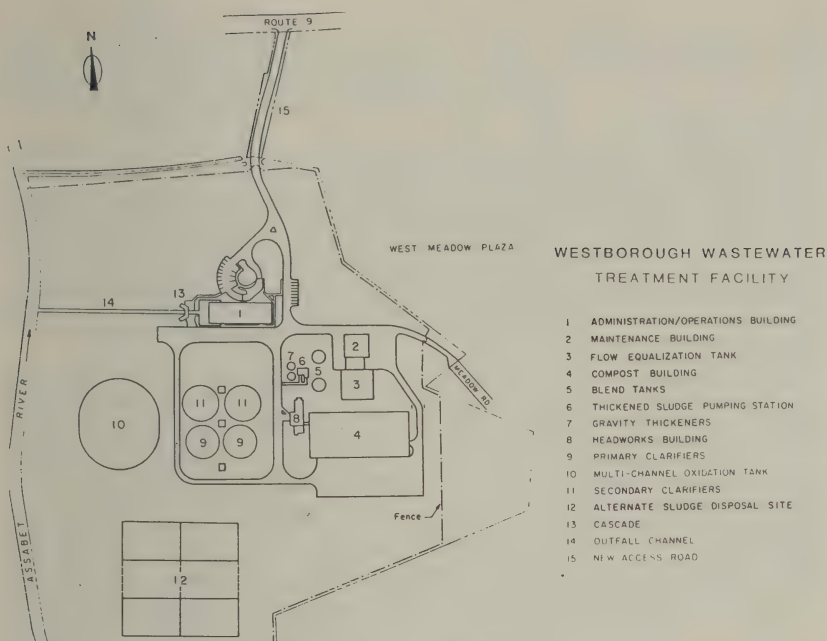
After the water works were operating at Sandra Pond in 1879, sewer lines were constructed down Main Street, across Willow Street, behind Water Street, along Robin Road and across Milk Street to West Meadow. Here the discharge, having flowed through town by gravity, was run through a brick screening house and then into the Assabet River.

When farmers downstream complained of the quality of the water, filter beds were established. Raymond Welsh, former Water and Sewer Commissioner, describes the town's sewer system, "In the 1950s there were three men working on the sewers, just as there are now. They had an antiquated wooden shed with one section for a horse and the other room for the men. The raw sewage was dumped on the filter beds, let dry, then raked off. The horse pulled the rake around the beds, the men shoveled the dried sewage onto a tipcart, then the horse dragged it off to the edge of the swamp where the contents were dumped. It wasn't until the late 1950s that we started to use a tractor for the work."

A modern treatment plant was constructed at West Meadow on forty-two acres between Milk and Otis Streets in 1970. The plant was designed to handle 1.1 million gallons a day maximum, with a daily average of 700,500 gallons. The sewage flowed into the treatment plant, where the solids were screened out onto filter beds, then the water was aerated, limed, and run into the Assabet River.

Again the elements of growth and prosperity in Westborough resulted in increased demands on town services; in the 1970s there was a demonstrated need for a sewer plant with a two million gallon capacity. A study committee was formed in 1972, and with the realization that neighboring Shrewsbury faced the same dilemma, a joint sewerage plant was investigated.

In 1979 the Treatment Plant Board, composed of members from the two towns, updated the studies and designed a facility that would attract federal and state funding. The design for the new joint treatment plant



Sewage Treatment Facility plans — 1984.

Courtesy of Gen. William Porter.

to be built on the site of Westborough's former treatment plant was accepted at the 1983 Westborough Town Meeting. In the spring of 1984 the Federal and State grant offers were received for the project — \$21,151,181 federal dollars, \$3,599,830 state dollars, with the \$3,836,444 remainder to be paid by Westborough and Shrewsbury. The \$28,587,455 treatment plant was slated for construction starting in September 1984 to be completed in 1987.

Town Water System

Despite its abundant lakes and streams, Westborough has had a continuing concern with adequate water for drinking and municipal use. Over a century ago town residents began to search for a body of pure water to serve the town's needs in place of private wells. The search was accelerated when a violent fire in 1868 destroyed the Parkman Store on West Main Street, underscoring the need for adequate water. In 1870 the town voted to increase to twelve the small brick reservoirs around town, but no definite action was taken to secure a town reservoir until 1878.

That year Westborough residents voted to purchase the pond on Up-

ton Road, owned by Frank Sandra, as the town water supply. Sandra Pond, fed by a 675-acre watershed including Jackstraw Brook, lies 138 feet above the town center, an ideal location to provide water downtown by gravity flow.

According to the 1878 Town Report a civil engineer recommended "putting Sandra Pond in suitable condition for present use as a reservoir, constructing a gate chamber, laying a leading main from the reservoir to the junction of School and South Streets, and supply mains in South Street, in East and West Main Streets, the latter extending from High to Church Streets, and setting the proper number of hydrants upon the contemplated mains."

Frank Sandra's pond and farm were purchased, the brush cleared, and the pond basin dug out and widened under the direction of Water Commissioner I. H. Bullard. The completed reservoir covered fifty-nine acres; the upper basin was originally a cranberry meadow. The spring-fed Sandra Pond is not very deep; one-third of the surface is six feet deep, one-third is three feet deep, and one-third is one foot or less. With trenches dug, iron pipes laid, the gate house constructed, and water meters installed in homes, the Westborough water works were put into operation on July 4, 1879. By 1881 the Westborough water works included fifty-four hydrants and three private hydrants.

Residents soon discovered that water from the new reservoir was not fit for consumption. The shallow pond, heavy vegetation, and uncleared brush combined to produce water that was distasteful and foul-smelling. Enlisting laborers from the town's Poor Farm, the town cleaned out the pond bottom. To purify the water, an earth dike was built, so that water in the upper basin was filtered into the lower basin.

The original water works satisfied the needs of Westborough until the 1940s; in 1946 the Town voted to increase water storage capability and upgrade the antiquated pumps. These improvements had just begun in March 1947 when the disastrous Hat Shop fire in the center of Westborough threatened the entire town's safety due to the lack of an adequate water supply. Soon after this tragedy, the one-half million gallon storage tank was built on Jackstraw Hill off Ruggles Street and a pumping station added near the reservoir. The completed tank and pumping station increased the town's capability to supply water to its outlying sections—an important step in opening Westborough to further residential development.

The town was once again endangered when Hurricane Dianne in August 1955 caused the lower reservoir to overflow. Fearing the collapse of the lower basin wall and the subsequent collapse of the dike between the up-

per and lower reservoirs, volunteers worked unceasingly to buttress the lower basin and divert the overflow. Their efforts succeeded, and Westborough was rescued from a major disaster.

In the 1950s new town wells were dug on Hopkinton Road and Morse Street, and in the 1960s two Andrews wells were added on Old Nourse Street. Also in the 1960s a 3.5 million gallon storage tank was erected on Newton's Hill overlooking Route 9 to provide Westborough with a high pressure water system for homes and hydrants.

Floods plagued Westborough in the 1950s, but in the early 1980s drought was a major concern. Water bans were put into effect in 1980, 1981, and 1983 dictating that residents be fined for using water indiscriminately. It was forbidden to wash cars, fill swimming pools, or water lawns from the municipal water supply. This water scarcity was alleviated in 1982 when the Otis Street well was opened and in 1984 when a third well on Old Nourse Street was dug, for a total of six town wells.

Westborough residents demanded between 1.5 and 2 million gallons of water daily in the 1980s, so the Water Search Committee has continued to look for water sources with the assistance of seismic tests donated by the Weston Geophysical Company. Westborough may be blessed with abundant water, but getting to it has proved a challenge.

Westborough Cemeteries

In the earliest days of the town of Westborough, church and state were



Memorial Cemetery.

Photo by Glenn Parker.

firmly united, but curiously the cemetery fell under municipal rather than ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In Westborough's first cemetery can be traced the life story — the beliefs, crises, and family ties — of the town's first settlers.

"Grave Plain" was the original name given Memorial Cemetery on West Main Street in the town's center. It is here in the southwest corner that five-year-old Nahor Rice was buried in 1704 after being captured and killed by the Cagnawaga Indians. His grave, most likely marked by a simple fieldstone, is no longer evident, but townspeople continued to use this land thereafter to bury their dead. In 1747 Grave Plain, encompassing about an acre and a half, officially became the town cemetery, and the second Meeting House was erected nearby two years later.

This Puritan cemetery is an open-air history and folk art museum. Carved on its slate stones are some of the earliest examples of American folk art, the eloquent symbols of the Puritan's religious and emotional life. There are death's heads, much like a skull with wings, to remind those passing by in the early 1700s of the inevitability of death. About 1750, as life in the Colonies became less harsh, soul effigies, resembling angels, were carved to stress Judgement Day and salvation rather than death's stark reality.



Gravestone of Capt. John Fay, first selectman, died 1748.

Photo by Daniel and Jesse Farber.

The Puritan gravestones of Reverend Ebenezer Parkman and his family illustrate this transition. His first wife Mary, who married Reverend Parkman in 1724 and died in 1735—leaving five children under age eleven—has a stone carved with a somber death's head. The grave of his daughter Hannah, who died in 1777 at age ten, has a soul effigy. Finally the 1801 gravestone of Reverend Parkman's widow (or relict) Hannah carries a willow and urn popular during the Greek Revival.

The Puritans guarded against class distinction in their cemetery. Stones for adults are the same size and are scattered democratically across the cemetery, unlike the English custom of burying the upper class in prominent locations. Only Reverend Ebenezer Parkman's gravestone is distinct in its size and shape. It is a large tablet stone carved with an epitaph extolling his fifty-eight years' work as Westborough's first spiritual leader, from 1724 until his death in 1782.

In Memorial Cemetery lie many of Westborough's founding fathers; the carved names of Fay, Newton, Brigham, Forbes, and Baker evoke the earliest days of Westborough's settlement. Native son and inventor, Eli Whitney, Jr., is not buried in Westborough but in New Haven, Connecticut. The graves of his family, however, are found here—the early Puritan markers replaced by an obelisk erected in the early 1800s.

The epitaphs on these stones speak across the generations, like that of Silas Newton, who died in 1789 at age sixteen:

*"So sudden was the stroke
When the Almighty spoke
But death's a debt to Nature due
Which now I've paid & so must you."*

Midland Cemetery

In 1810 Midland Cemetery between South and School Streets was established, covering approximately one and a half acres. Here many Civil War veterans are buried, plus others like Silas Wesson, Joshua Mellen, and Benjamin Nourse, who were instrumental in Westborough's early commercial and industrial development. The stones here are carved with designs and epitaphs popular in the nineteenth century and cover the period up to the early 1900s.

Pine Grove Cemetery

Reverend Ebenezer Parkman was given a pine lot of sixteen acres lying east of the Mendon Road (South Street) around 1746, and it is this land that was developed into Pine Grove Cemetery in 1844. This cemetery, still used by the town, covers approximately twenty acres.

St. Luke's Catholic Cemetery

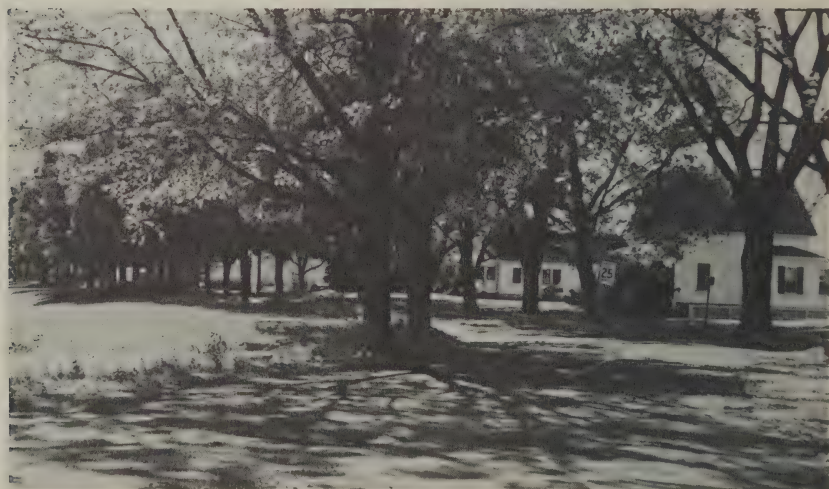
St. Luke's Cemetery was opened in 1869 on Hopkinton Road. It has continued to be used since that time and is privately maintained by the Church of St. Luke the Evangelist.

Town Trees

Currently it is the Tree Warden in the Department of Public Works who oversees the care and planting of trees in municipal areas of Westborough. In the nineteenth century, however, it was the industrious citizens of the Village Improvement Society who took charge of town beautification through tree planting. This Village Improvement Society, organized in November 1878, had planted over 900 shade trees by 1890. Westborough became famous for its luxuriant shade trees, especially chestnuts and elms, that formed a canopy over its main streets.

Unfortunately, by the mid-1950s Westborough had lost over 4,000 trees to disease, the 1938 hurricane, and the 1953 tornado. Citizens responded to a community appeal by buying tree certificates to establish a tree fund; through this effort 200 trees were purchased and planted.

When the Westborough Conservation Area was established in 1969, community groups and the D.P.W. reforested the land around the reservoir. To commemorate the 200th anniversary of the United States in 1975, the town's Bicentennial Commission planted forty-six trees in memory of



East Main St. looking west from Lyman about 1950.

Courtesy of Bud Witherell.

local Minutemen in the newly established Minuteman Park along Sandra Pond on Upton Road. The former glory of Westborough's shaded streets remains for the most part a memory.

Parks and Recreation

Westborough residents have always enjoyed setting work aside for recreation with their neighbors, whether it be a field day at Chauncy Park in the 1880s or a softball game at Storey Field in the 1980s. One hundred years ago the Board of Trade organized town events; now it is the Recreation Commission — but the comradery and good exercise remain the common goals.

Lake Chauncy Beach

The bathing beach at Lake Chauncy had been run many years by M. J. Cominsky when the Westborough Kiwanis Club leased it in 1937. Through a series of fundraisers — concerts and dances — the Kiwanis Club raised enough money to buy the beach in 1938 and build the bathhouse. The Club continued to manage the beach and rent boats to fishermen until the 1960s.

The land was then bought by Gregory O'Neil, who built the present 250-car parking lot and generally improved the area. At the 1969 Town Meeting residents voted to buy the beach from O'Neil for \$59,910, the



East Main looking west from Lyman in 1984.

Photo by Paula Skog.



Lake Chauncy Beach.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

sum he paid for it. That year Chauncy Beach came under the supervision of the Westborough Parks and Recreation Commission. Since 1969 in its summer recreation program at Lake Chauncy the town has offered Red Cross swimming lessons to hundreds of Westborough children. Fishing and boating are also popular pastimes at the 178 acre Lake Chauncy.

Lake Hoccomocco

From 1967 to 1971 beach and picnic facilities were made available to town residents at Lake Hoccomocco. The local Jaycees worked to make the area attractive for family recreation, and the town swimming instructions were held at Lake Hoccomocco in 1967 and 1968.

Townspeople had been swimming at "Hocca" for many years, unmindful of the fact that creosote had been seeping into the Lake from the nearby pits used by the Montan Treating Company from 1928 to 1946 to treat railroad ties and telephone poles. In 1983 Lake Hoccomocco was put on a priority list of hazardous waste sites slated for cleanup after studies were done by the state's Department of Environmental Quality Engineering and the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Officials feared that the nearby municipal well on Otis Street might become contaminated.

Roundtop Recreation Area

Roundtop or Grindstone Hill off Ruggles Street became a focal point of town recreation when the ski slope was established there in 1967.

Through the efforts of Tony Camerota, who directed the ski slope activities and headed the Ski Patrol for many years, a 700-foot electrically driven rope tow was installed and the slope groomed for use in the winter of 1968. Children and adults enjoy skiing on the slope approximately thirty days a season — on evenings, weekends, and school winter vacations when the snow conditions are good.

A portable skating rink was also erected at the foot of Roundtop in 1967 and used several winters. Sliding and tobogganing round out the winter activities at the site. A playground for young children was opened at the foot of Roundtop in 1968, when the Lions Club donated swings and other playground equipment for this project.

Hyder Street Playground

A recreational site was developed on Hyder Street and playground equipment installed in 1973. This playground is geared to children four to eight.

Upton Road Ballfield

The increased participation in town softball leagues and youth Little Leagues called for additional ballfields. The town ballfield on Upton Road was completed the spring of 1974 to help meet this demand.

Earl Storey Field

In 1977 residents voted at Town Meeting to develop the Earl Storey Field, a ten-acre recreational site, on Haskell Street. Yearly additions have been made to the site so that in 1984 the Storey Field boasts a softball field, two basketball courts, two tennis courts, and a playground for small children. Adjacent to Storey Field is recreational land on a five-year lease from the state that the town is developing as a full-size soccer field.

Recreation Programs

The Westborough Recreation Commission, under fulltime director Frank DeSiata, offers a variety of recreational programs to town residents. In 1972 and 1973, after the Lyman School had been discontinued, Westborough was allowed to use the gym, swimming pool, and roller skating rink for town recreation programs. Although this program came to an abrupt end, in 1984 over twenty-five different recreational programs are offered to residents year-round with the cooperation of 300 volunteers. These programs include soccer and volleyball in the fall; youth and adult basketball, skiing, indoor soccer, volleyball, and gymnastics in the winter; and tennis, swimming, soccer, and youth and adult softball in the summer.



WESTBOROUGH CHURCHES

The Evangelical Congregational Church

The Evangelical Congregational Church has its roots in the first church in Westborough, established on Powder Hill in 1724 under Reverend Ebenezer Parkman. Since the church and state were considered one until 1825, the history of the Evangelical Congregational Church mirrors the early development of the town. (See Chapter 2.)

After Reverend Parkman's death in 1782, the town's church continued to grow. The Religious Freedom Act of 1811 and the official separation of church and state in 1825 encouraged a diversity of religious views in Westborough and a branching out from the first church. As a result of the trinitarian-unitarian dispute that arose in Congregational churches throughout New England in the 1830s, fifty-six members left to form the Evangelical Society on January 8, 1834, while those remaining became the First Congregational Unitarian Society.

The Evangelical Congregational Church was built on the east corner of Church and West Main Streets and dedicated by Reverend Elisha Rockwood on December 17, 1834. A row of carriage sheds lined the rear of the property.

The Congregational Church prospered in its new location. In 1869 the entire first floor was jacked up and meeting rooms added underneath. Afternoon church services were conducted in addition to morning services until 1875. The Evangelical Society and the Evangelical Church were merged in August 1888 when the Church was incorporated.



Evangelical Congregational Church with original steeple, b. 1834.

Courtesy of C. Eddy, Westborough Illustrated, 1886.

The 200th anniversary of the Evangelical Congregational Church in 1924 was celebrated in music and drama. In 1950 Kirkside, a former home for the elderly at 8 Church Street, was acquired as a parish house. A new church school addition, the Douglass Paul Teschner Chancel, and the Parkman Chapel were dedicated on November 22, 1964. The Congregational Church, for almost a century the only church in town, has grown with Westborough and has accepted through the years the addition of other town churches in a spirit of brotherhood.

First Baptist Church

Religious freedom, sought by the first Puritan settlers of Westborough, was not readily granted to those who followed. Since the church and state were considered a single entity, only male members of the church—the Congregational Church—were allowed a voice in religious and secular matters. In addition, all landowners were taxed to support the town's minister and church.

Not all residents shared the Congregational religious views, however. Those of the Baptist faith were the first to worship independently, although by law they were expected to support the Congregational Church finan-



Third Baptist Church with original steeple, b. 1869.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

cially. The first record of Westborough Baptists begins on May 29, 1796, with the baptism of James Hawes, Jr. and Asa Haskell in Lake Chauncy. Other Baptists joined the small congregation until on September 30, 1811, the First Baptist Society was established with fourteen men and one woman.

The founding of the Baptist Society was authorized by the Religious Freedom Act passed by the General Court in 1811. The Act stated, "All religious sects and denominations, demeaning themselves peaceably shall be equally under protection of the law and there shall be no subordination of one sect to another, and any person who is a member of one sect or denomination shall be exempt from taxation for the support of public worship in every other religious body."

The First Baptist Society selected James Hawes, Jr. moderator and met in the home of his father, Dr. James Hawes (Tom Cook House) on the corner of East Main and Lyman Streets. Services were also held at the home of Deacon John Beeman on Flanders Road; over the years so many baptisms took place in the nearby brook that the Society called it "the little Jordan."

The Baptist Society was advanced in its thinking for the times—Lydia

Haskell was allowed to voice an opinion and vote as a member, although it was not until 1832 that the Society formally voted that "females belonging to the church have the power of voting as formerly practiced." Equality was stressed early in the Society's history: Black Paul, the negro preacher, was recognized in the spring of 1813, and the congregation took a stand against slavery as early as 1842.

The First Baptist Church was organized on October 5, 1814 with thirty-nine men and women. The Church differed from the Society in that it concentrated exclusively on spiritual matters while the Baptist Society dealt with practical matters. The two remained separate until the Society merged with the Church in 1890.

The first minister of the Baptist Church was Elder Thomas Conant, who served from 1814 to 1816. In 1816 a Baptist Church was erected on the Hawes property at 114 East Main Street at a cost of \$1,600. The forty-seven pews were sold and the best locations went to the highest bidder; the most expensive sold for \$64. For the next fifteen years there was no settled minister. By 1824 there were ninety-three members of the Baptist Church of Westborough, but the following year thirty members withdrew to form the Fayville Baptist Church in Southborough.

A more spacious Baptist meeting house was built and dedicated on April 1, 1835 on the corner of West Main and Central Streets. When the town meeting house was sold as an arcade in 1837, the Baptists were able to acquire its Paul Revere bell—it hangs in the Baptist belfry to this day. The church continued to grow, so in 1868 this second Baptist Church was sold to Westborough's Catholic parish and moved to Milk Street.

The third, and present, Baptist Church building was constructed in 1869 on the site of the second. Extensive renovations were made in 1916 when the baptistry, pulpit platform, and new organ were installed. The church suffered tremendous damage during the hurricane of 1938 when the steeple fell across West Main Street, pulling off with it the front of the church. After extensive repairs worship services in the Baptist Church resumed and have continued to the present.

First Congregational Unitarian Universalist Society

For over one hundred years the Unitarian and Congregational Churches in Westborough were one, sharing a common Puritan heritage. During the 1830s all over New England, however, Congregational churches were split by the trinitarian-unitarian theological controversy. For a while the Westborough congregation tried to alternate the sermons between the two philosophies, but this proved an untenable solution.

In 1834 those adhering to the trinitarian belief left the First Society to



First Congregational Unitarian/Universalist Society, b. 1850.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

build a separate church, calling themselves the Evangelical Congregationalists. Those remaining held to their Unitarian view and attempted to conduct worship services in the old Meeting House above the roar of the passing trains. The Unitarians remained in the Meeting House until 1837 when the general disrepair of the structure and the proximity of the railroad convinced the congregation to sell the property to Luther Chamberlain for use as a shopping arcade.

The First Congregational Unitarian Society bought their present property at 64 West Main Street from Draper Ruggles in 1848 for \$1,000. The meeting house was then built and dedicated in January 1850. The church's income derived from the sale of pews, which were taxed annually.

In 1870 women were permitted to officially join the Society and sign the membership book. The year 1881 saw the addition of the chapel and ladies' parlor at the rear of the meeting house. Through the generosity of Dr. William Curtis, the 3 School Street parsonage was built, a furnace

added, and half the addition financed. The old gas lamps were replaced in 1895 by electric lights, and a new pipe organ was added in 1898. By 1921 the church's steeple was in such bad repair that it had to be removed, but in 1930 Isadore Forbes donated the funds to have the steeple rebuilt and a bell installed.

The merger between the Unitarian and Universalist Churches occurred in 1961 when the local congregation voted to support this national movement. Since 1980 the Unitarian Universalist Churches in Westborough and Northborough have participated in a shared ministry with joint clergy serving both towns.

First United Methodist Church

Methodists have worshipped in Westborough since 1798 when Bishop Asbury noted that he and four others preached at the home of Mr. Nichols (most likely Fortunatus Nichols). Services, usually conducted by pastors from surrounding towns, were sporadic until 1857.

At that time interest in the Methodist Church was sparked by the arrival of two young men, Warren Browne and William Nottage, who hoped to earn enough money working on local farms to become preachers. Their enthusiasm and dedication inspired the young men to hold religious meetings in a nearby schoolhouse, and these gatherings attracted many new Methodists.

On January 5, 1858 the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized with Francis D. Stratton named leader. The Methodists were granted permission to use the District #1 Central School next to Memorial Cemetery for Sunday worship for the sum of \$1.25 and \$.50 for evenings. Reverend Joseph Cromack of Shrewsbury agreed to be their first pastor.

During its first year, the Methodist Church established a Sunday School—with an average attendance of fifty—and a Ladies Benevolent Society. As their membership grew over the next five years, the Methodists recognized the need for a permanent place of worship. They decided to build their first church on Milk Street on the former ice house lot (present Grange).

In earlier times this low land behind the stores on West Main Street had been covered with water that in winter was cut into ice blocks and stored in sawdust in the ice house on Milk Street. The pond had been drained and the ice house demolished by 1864 when the Methodists purchased the lot for their new church. Unfortunately, after the church was built, worship was frequently interrupted by the train roaring by on its track parallel to Milk Street. Services were held in this building until 1897 when the building was sold to the Grange.



First Methodist Church, Milk St., b. 1864 (Grange Hall).

Courtesy of W. Eddy, Westborough Illustrated, 1886.



First United Methodist Church, W. Main St., b. 1969.

Photo by Paula Skog.

The Methodists at first bought a parsonage at the end of West Street but soon erected an eleven-room house on the corner of Church and Heath Streets as their parsonage. This house was sold as a private home at the same time the first church was sold, leaving the Society with \$1,600 toward the purchase of a new church.

At the time the Methodist Society was expanding, the Second Advent congregation—established in 1859—was dwindling, so the Advent Chapel at 12 Church Street was sold to the Methodists. The Chapel and home behind it were purchased and renovated under the direction of Reverend Fayette Nichols. When it was decided to turn the Chapel parallel to Church Street, many young men in the church dug the foundation while Stephen Gilmore supplied the bricks from his brickyard. Donations flowed in for the new organ; the Hunt (bicycle) Saddle Company donated a large sum since most of its employees were members of the church.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was dedicated during the first week of January 1900. This chapel served the Methodist congregation for sixty-six years. In 1953 a large downstairs room was added for the Sunday School and church suppers. In the fall of 1957 the former J. S. Mason residence on the corner of Church and Grove Streets was purchased as a parish house. Renamed the Coldwell House, the building housed the pastor's study and Sunday school rooms.

As the church continued to grow, plans were made to relocate to a larger facility. The chapel at 12 Church Street and the parsonage were sold to the Siloam Masonic Lodge in 1966. The Methodists purchased 2½ acres on the corner of West Main and West End Avenue across from the Country Club as the site of their new church.

In May 1968 the Methodist Church and the Evangelical Brethren Church merged nationally, so that all Methodist churches became United Methodist churches. That same year ground was broken for the new Methodist Church in Westborough. The Coldwell House was sold and a new parsonage at 1 Jennings Road was purchased in 1969. The new First United Methodist Church of Westborough was consecrated on October 12, 1969.

Masons in Westborough, Siloam Lodge A. F. and A. M.

Local Masons established the Siloam Lodge on June 14, 1866 and leased a hall in the Union Block on South Street for their meetings. George Forbes was the Lodge's first Grand Master. "Siloam" has as a Biblical definition "sent" and is also the name of a celebrated pool or fountain in Jerusalem.

When the Post Office Block was erected in 1869, the Masonic Hall was moved to occupy half of the block's third floor. That year the Westborough



Masonic Hall, Church St., formerly the First Methodist Church, (1900).
Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

Masons contributed to the building of the Masonic Temple in Boston and at the dedication of that Temple were reviewed by President Andrew Johnson during a procession with 10,000 other Masons through the state capitol.

In 1917 Masonic club rooms for social and literary purposes were set up in the former Savings Bank rooms on the second floor of the Post Office Block. These club rooms were used until 1950. It was during the 1920s that the membership of the Lodge reached over 300.

Since its founding, the Siloam Lodge hoped to establish a Masonic Temple of its own. That dream was realized when the Methodist Church on Church Street was purchased by the Lodge in 1966. The Siloam Lodge celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1966 and has continued to be an active part of the Westborough community to this day.

St. Luke The Evangelist Church

Father Fitton, founder of Holy Cross College, mentioned in his records for 1834 that a "station," that is a place where mass was held, had been established in Westborough for the town's Catholic bootmakers. In the



St. Luke's Church, b. 1888, burned 1920 and rectory, razed 1980.

Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

1800s the Irish, French Canadians, Italians, and other new settlers were drawn to towns like Westborough that offered ample work in factories and on the railroad.

Westborough was recognized as a regular station of Worcester in 1851, and by 1855 there were about 445 Catholic residents in town. At first services were held at Spring Street in the homes of Daniel Hackett, James Kane, and Patrick Casey. When the local Catholics were denied use of Town Hall for their worship services, they collected funds to build their own church. Mr. Otis donated one-half acre on Elm Street for the proposed building. Before long, however, Selectman Ethan Bullard did obtain the town's consent for his Catholic neighbors to worship in Town Hall.

The Catholics finally found a permanent place of worship in 1869 when the pastor Father Barry purchased the former Baptist Church on West Main Street. The property on Elm Street was exchanged for a plot on Milk Street, and the church was moved to this Milk Street site. In 1870 Westborough was made a parish with Reverend Father Richard Donovan named its first resident pastor. The Milk Street Church served the Catholic parish until it was destroyed by fire on April 4, 1886.

A new St. Luke the Evangelist Church was built on the southwest corner of Ruggles and West Main Streets under the supervision of Father John J. McCoy. Bishop John J. Keane, who later became the Archbishop of Washington, preached the sermon at the dedication of the church on



St. Luke the Evangelist 1921 — Present.
Courtesy of Philip M. Kittredge, Jr.

August 1, 1888. This wooden church was built in a Romanesque style and stood beside the Victorian rectory of a similar style built under Father C. J. Cronin. The parish worshipped in this church until the building was lost in a fire in 1920.

Another St. Luke the Evangelist Church was constructed within a year for \$112,496 under the direction of Father John D. McGann. At the time of its dedication the church was almost entirely paid for.

St. Luke's parish has continued to expand. In 1969 its three-story Catechetical Center was constructed with religious education classrooms, a parish library, and a large auditorium. The last vestiges of the old St. Luke's disappeared in 1980 when the old rectory was dismantled and replaced by a modern facility on the corner of Charles and West Main Streets.

The Knights of Columbus

The Order of the Knights of Columbus was founded by Father Michael McGivney in New Haven in 1882 to promote fellowship and charity. Westborough's John Boyle O'Reilly Council was chartered by the Supreme Council on January 7, 1894. It was the 85th Council of the Knights of Columbus to be chartered in this country. Westborough's K of C Hall was built at 17 Willow Street in 1960.

The Daughters of Isabella

The Daughters of Isabella became an auxiliary to the Knights of Columbus in 1897. The Westborough chapter Stella Maris Circle #482 was instituted on April 7, 1929 with Mrs. Anne Boswell as the first regent.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Episcopalian services were held in Westborough in 1872 under the auspices of St. Mark's Church in Southborough. Services were held occasionally until 1898. That year the house and stable at 71 West Main Street were purchased as a permanent meeting place for the Episcopalians. With the help of architects, the parishioners converted the stable into a church, and the first services were held there in January 1899.

Following the formation of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the weakening of its ties with St. Mark's, the St. Stephen Mission in Westborough adopted formal by-laws in 1908. Worship services continued to be held in the converted stable for many years, conducted by a vicar shared first with Grafton and then with Hopkinton.

As St. Stephen's grew after World War II, the need for expanded facilities became evident. In 1954 Reverend Edgar Sanford, then the full-



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, John St., b. 1957.

Photo by Paula Skog.

time vicar, appointed a Building Planning Committee with a bequest from Thornton Fay forming the nucleus of the building fund. A new vicarage was purchased on West End Avenue, and on July 8, 1956, ground was broken for the new church on John Street.

The church was dedicated on September 22, 1957. Continued construction added Fay Hall, Chase Chapel, and the church offices. In 1977 the St. Stephen's Mission became a Parish with the Reverend David Knight named the first Rector. Two years later St. Stephen's Episcopal Church entered into a covenant relationship with St. Luke the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church.

The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is one of the most recent to be established in Westborough. The congregation first began worshipping together in 1960 utilizing the Forbes Community Building for Sunday services and Sunday School. After five years the Lutherans were able to arrange shared use of the facilities at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on John Street.

In 1968 the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church was built at 185 West Main Street on Ward's Corner. Dedication of the new church was held



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, W. Main St., b. 1968.

Photo by Paula Skog.

on May 8, 1968. That summer the Lutheran Vacation Bible School was instituted for all school-age children in the community during the month of August. The Lutheran Church provided this service for the following ten years until the Vacation Bible School merged with the ecumenical vacation bible school offered in July.

In 1976 the congregation of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church voted to leave the Missouri Synod with a view toward joining the Lutheran Union of the United States in future years. The Lutheran Church, like many others in Westborough, is a mobile parish and has grown as the town has developed since the 1960s.

The Baha'i Community

The Baha'i Community in Westborough was founded by Dr. and Mrs. Noorullah Khamsi from Iran in the late 1960s. The first Baha'i services were held in Dr. Khamsi's home, and worship continues to be held regularly in members' homes. The first Assembly chosen to govern the community on spiritual and business matters was elected in 1971. Since there is no clergy in the Baha'i community, the Assembly handles all marriages, divorces, etc. There are approximately thirty members of the Baha'i community in Westborough, and the thrust of the Baha'i belief lies in the establishment of world unity. The Baha'is have taken an active part in the town's ecumenical events.



Admiral Louis Denfeld Home/B'nai Shalom, 9 Charles St., c. 1886.

Photo by Paula Skog.

Congregation B'nai Shalom

The home of Admiral and Mrs. Louis E. Denfeld at 9 Charles Street was transformed in 1980 into the home of Congregation B'nai Shalom, Westborough's first permanent house of worship for area Jews. The house had been vacant since the death of Mrs. Rachel Denfeld in 1978; her husband, Admiral Denfeld, Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, D. C. from 1947-1950, had died in 1972.

At that time Congregation B'nai Shalom in Westborough had grown and was looking for a permanent place of worship. Rather than commuting to Framingham or Worcester for Hebrew School, the Congregation hoped to establish a school locally. They were able to purchase the Denfeld home in 1979, and for six months more than fifty people worked on the interior and exterior renovations under the direction of Ken Schongold and Carolyn Phillips.

One of the sunporches was combined with the parlor to create the sanctuary. The dining room became a meeting room and classroom. The Admiral's library was converted to the Rabbi's study. The heated two-car garage was transformed into a multi-purpose function room.

The first Friday services were held at Congregation B'nai Shalom's new

quarters in March 1980. Their first rabbi, Rabbi Debra Hachen, was installed at 9 Charles Street on October 10, 1980.

Ecumenical Church Activities

A spirit of good will and acceptance among Westborough churches has manifested itself in numerous ecumenical and interfaith activities since the early 1970s. Each November an ecumenical Thanksgiving service invites all residents to worship and give thanks together for their common bounty. The churches also share in hosting and sponsoring the Thanksgiving dinner for the elderly. In the spring Congregation B'nai Shalom gives an interfaith seder dinner at Passover for the community. There is also an ecumenical Good Friday service shared by the Christians.

Much of this cooperation has been an outgrowth of the Westborough Clergy Association, which was founded in 1972. This informal association of clergymen representing all the faiths in Westborough, including the Baha'is, has worked together to build a firm foundation of brotherhood. Out of their monthly meetings has grown not only the united worship services but the church basketball league and initial funding of a street social worker. The Westborough Clergy Association has also supported the Pastoral Counseling Center in which area churches subsidize the funding for a professional counseling staff serving Westborough residents. In February 1984 the Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling Center was formed as an outgrowth of the original service and continues to be housed in Kirkside, 8 Church Street, for the convenience of Westborough clients.



STATE LAND IN WESTBOROUGH

Town/State Relations

Presently the Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns over 1,200 acres in Westborough at the former Lyman School and Westborough State Hospital plus acreage near the former Grafton State Hospital. Private developers have shown marked interest in the Lyman School/State Hospital property since it occupies a prime location near Route 9.

In December 1981 Westborough residents learned of a proposal by MEG Enterprises of St. Louis to build a multi-million dollar theme park, office complex, and hotel resort on the 1,200 acres of the Lyman School/State Hospital land. This proposal had been developed without the advice or approval of local boards and came as a complete surprise to the town. With a severe shortage of water and sewer facilities existing in town at the time, Westborough residents were quick to express their concern about the project's massive impact on town services.

Westborough citizens formed a Home Rule Committee to mount a defense against the development of the land without local input. When the state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) held a hearing about the project in Westborough, more than 350 residents attended, many to register their opposition. The EOEA then ruled that MEG Enterprises must file an Environmental Impact Report; at that point the developer

put the project on hold until he received further support – which never materialized.

In the meantime the town appointed a State Land Re-use Study Committee to work with state agencies, local officials, and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Committee to study the suitable uses of the property. A comprehensive survey was done of the town residents, and the results of this 1982 survey indicated that townspeople would like to see the land used for agriculture, conservation, recreation, municipal use, and perhaps light industry should the property be declared surplus by the state.

The State Reform School

In 1848 Westborough became the location of the first state reform school to be established in the United States. This reform school continued to operate in town for over 120 years, until 1971. In a 1854 report in the *National Magazine*, the Westborough Reform School was described as “the first enterprise in our country whereby a state, in the character of a common parent, has undertaken the high and sacred duty of rescuing and restoring her lost children, not so much by the terrors of the law as by the gentler influences of the school.”

The Massachusetts Legislature had selected Westborough, with its good agricultural land and central location, as the site of this endeavor in 1846.



Reform School 1848-1885, Lake Chauncy.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

The sum of \$10,000 was authorized for its construction. The Honorable Theodore Lyman of Brookline, attracted by the concept of a reformatory rather than a penal institution, donated \$20,000 more. The farms of Lovett Peters and the Rice family — encompassing 200 acres on the northern and eastern shores of Lake Chauncy — were purchased for the school.

The main school building, a twin-towered Italianate structure, was constructed with formal gardens and orchards sweeping down to the shores of the lake. Its central enclosed courtyard for outdoor exercise was designed to emphasize a school, rather than prison, atmosphere. The Westborough Reform School under its first superintendent, William R. Lincoln, was dedicated in 1848. At the ceremony Horace Mann, along with other dignitaries, praised this rehabilitation experiment to be undertaken in Westborough.

The school was initially built to accommodate 300 boys; in 1852 it was enlarged to house 250 more in a "congregate" system. The boys were sent to the Reform School for truancy, larceny, vagrancy, disobedience, and stubbornness. The sentences were often "for minority," with the average age being 12½ years. The 1854 report stated, "When they enter, the majority are haggard, ragged, emaciated, and vile in the extreme." James Talcott, Reform School superintendent from 1853-1857, expressed the school's philosophy in adding, "Much more can usually be gained by kindness and appeals to conscience than by other means. Boys of this class generally have but little self-respect, therefore great effort is made to have them respect themselves."

The daily schedule of six hours of labor and four hours of school encouraged discipline and diligence. The boys were taught useful trades in the shoe shop, chair shop, steam mill, laundry, sewing room, and kitch-



Reform School sewing class and chair caning shop.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

en. They learned to cane chair seats, repair boots, mend socks, trim hats, and cook meals. Good behavior was rewarded by assignments to outdoor work on the large school garden and orchard. The boys' work not only fulfilled the School's needs but served the community as well. To learn a useful trade many of the boys were indentured to local craftsmen—from blacksmiths and coopers to farmers and shoemakers.

The boys also participated in a drill company (the Lyman Cadets) and a volunteer fire company (the Lyman Engine Company). For recreation they played baseball, swam, rowed, and skated on Lake Chauncy in season.

The older, more troublesome boys were sent to sea in reform school ships in 1860. With a smaller school population a "family system" could be adopted at the Westborough Reform School. Three farmhouses—the Peters House, Garden House, and Farm House—were each set up as living quarters for thirty boys with a live-in couple as supervisors. These "trust boys" were allowed to live and attend classes in the houses, apart from the four congregate units in the main facility. However, when the older boys were transferred back to Westborough in 1875, the individualized family system was found impractical and had to be discontinued.

The Lyman School for Boys

In 1884 the state decided to establish the newly chartered Westborough



Lyman School for Boys, built 1885 on Powder Hill.

Courtesy of Barbara Smith.



Oak Cottage at Lyman School.

Courtesy of Kristina Allen.

Insane Hospital on the shores of Lake Chauncy and to relocate the Reform School to Powder Hill along the Boston-Worcester Turnpike. A \$50,000 legacy from Theodore Lyman financed much of the new school's construction, and the facility became officially known as the Lyman School for Boys.

Large brick dormitories, called cottages, were built near the site of Westborough's first Meeting House. Eventually these cottages included the Oak, Hillside, Wayside, and Boulder Cottages plus Lyman Hall, Chauncy Hall, the Gables, and Willow Park. The Lyman School was organized along the family system. The Trustees of the school reported in 1887, "The school now consists of a farm of ninety-nine acres, on which stand farm buildings and four houses, entirely apart from each other. A family, consisting of master, matron, teachers, laundress and about twenty-five boys, live in each house. . . ."

"The boys rise at five, have an hour in school from half-past five to half-past six, then breakfast, and work at housework, or on the farm, or in shops, from seven to half-past eleven. Dinner is at twelve. From one to half-past two is work again, then recreation for half an hour, and school from three to six; after that, supper, recreation, and prayers, and bed-time at eight o'clock. . . . The housework is done entirely by the boys, the officers doing little but supervise; and the prevailing order and cleanliness, and the cheerful faces of the little workers, are always pleasant to see."



The Lyman School Band.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

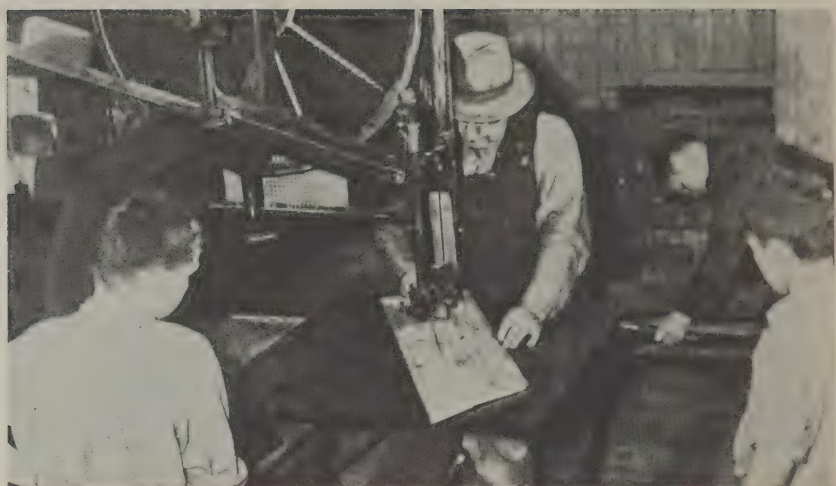
By 1890 there were 194 boys and 37 officers, and the maximum admission age had been set at fifteen.

Until the 1960s the Lyman School for Boys was a separate, but important, facet of the Westborough community. Westborough residents remember the fine Lyman School Band that struck up memorable tunes at the annual Memorial Day parade and other town events. The Lyman School boys also earned great admiration for their craftsmanship in the school's carpentry shop, print shop, and sewing room. Examples of their handiwork were often displayed in town at the annual Grange Fair.

Some of the local farms took in Lyman School boys to board and work on their land. These boys attended the Westborough public schools and did their chores alongside the local farm children. Whenever the town sounded a call for help in times of hurricanes, tornadoes, or floods, the Lyman School boys and staff could be relied on to respond quickly.

Reverend Frederick "Bob" Brown, chaplain and later administrator at the Lyman School from 1959 to 1971, says, "The Reform School tried to replicate a family situation with live-in houseparents. But when work shifts were introduced in the 1930s, it was difficult to maintain a family atmosphere."

According to Reverend Brown, who now works with the Department of Youth Services, a delinquent boy between the ages of twelve and seventeen would be sentenced to Lyman School to earn a certain number of credits set by the Youth Services Board. The credits were earned by good



Carpentry shop at the Lyman School for Boys.

Courtesy of Westborough Public Library.

behavior and diligence in various areas. Homeless boys were also sent to Lyman School.

The emphasis continued to be on rehabilitation and job training. "We wanted the boys to know the importance of education and good quality work," says Reverend Brown. "We hoped to establish good work habits and an interest in a trade. I still get calls from all over the country from boys who have 'made it,' and it's very gratifying."

Each day the boys attended school, then worked at different jobs, including trade programs with the school plumbers, electricians, and carpenters. Much of the printing for the State was done at Lyman School's outstanding print shop. The large farm provided many jobs and won awards for its produce and livestock. It was here that food for the School was raised until the 1950s. Since the love of the boys for animals was so strong, a 4-H style pet farm was reinstituted in later years.

For recreation the Lyman School boys could use the swimming pool, roller skating rink, and gymnasium on the grounds. Movies, plays, and musical programs were frequently presented in the auditorium.

By the 1960s, however, the state's reform school system had become beset with problems. Westborough, like the other reform schools, was troubled with runaways and inadequate facilities. At one time there were as many as 590 boys in the school designed to hold a little over 300. "In the last years Lyman School became overcrowded, and this overpopulation created complex problems," explains Reverend Brown. "Individualized

treatment and the cottage system became impossible to continue. Society became more permissive, and there was a move against all institutions, good and bad, in the late 1960s. Lyman School was turned into a therapeutic community for no more than 325 boys."

Massachusetts passed reform legislation in 1969, and in 1971 Jerome G. Miller, Commissioner of Youth Services, ordered all reform schools closed in Massachusetts. In their place alternative, community-based programs were offered by private agencies and contracted for by the Department of Youth Services. In Westborough The Bridge, a residential treatment center for about ten to twelve boys, was established at 10 Grove Street in 1973. The Bridge group home continued to operate until 1984 when a fire damaged the facility.

Westborough continues to play a part in the rehabilitation of troubled youths. Four secure treatment centers, each accommodating up to fifteen boys, have been established in cooperation with the Department of Youth Services on the Westborough State Hospital grounds since 1979. The Robert F. Kennedy School was opened in 1979 under the direction of Michael Welch as one of the few long-term juvenile secure treatment centers in the state. These centers emphasize education, rehabilitation, and intense individualized counseling in their program.

Powder Hill Today

State Use

The former Lyman School property on Powder Hill is currently used by several state agencies. The Water Pollution Control Division and the Public Welfare Department have offices in some of the former school buildings.

On the 330 acres used by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife are two great ponds, Chauncy and Little Chauncy, which are stocked with wall-eyed pike and large-mouth bass. There is also a bird dog field trial area, a beagle training area, and the headquarters of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. From this headquarters the work of five state wildlife districts is coordinated. All the wildlife and fish research for Massachusetts is done by the seven game biologists and eight aquatic biologists in the Westborough laboratories.

Microelectronics Center

Fifty acres on the Lyman School grounds have been earmarked as the site of the \$40 million Massachusetts Microelectronics Center. A cooperative venture of the state's high tech industries and nine engineering schools, this center will train future and present engineers in advanced



Maples Cottage, Lyman School Grounds, c. 1832.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

semiconductor technology. Both a research and development facility and a microchip production plant are planned for the center.

Spectrum House

Spectrum House, the oldest and largest drug therapeutic center in Massachusetts, moved to Powder Hill from Grafton State Hospital in 1973. Currently fifty-seven residents involved in this self-help rehabilitation program are living and working in two of the houses on the grounds.

One of the Spectrum homes is Maples Cottage, built in 1832 on the foundation of the original Parkman parsonage. Nearby facing the Turn-



Nathan Fisher / Joseph Lothrop House, c. 1825.

Photo by Paula Skog.

pike is the double house built by Nathan Fisher and Joseph Lothrop as a store in the 1820s. Both these houses, part of the town's early commercial center of Wessonville, have been placed on the National Register of Historic Homes.

District Court

On the southwest portion of the property bordering Milk Street is the Massachusetts District Court, Westborough Division. This courthouse was opened in 1972 to serve five surrounding towns.

Municipal Use

Westborough has been constructing its \$850,000 headquarters for the town's Department of Public Works on nineteen acres given to Westborough for this purpose by the state. The facility includes offices, a garage, and salt shed for the DPW and should be completed in 1984.



Main Buildings of Westborough State Hospital, est. 1886.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

Westborough State Hospital

In 1884 the Westborough Insane Hospital was incorporated, and the Massachusetts Legislature directed the transfer of the 275-acre farm and the former Reform School buildings to the new institution. The first superintendent of the institution, Dr. Nathaniel Emmons Paine, assumed his new duties in May 1885. Two years later Dr. Paine was appointed lecturer in insanity at the Medical School of Boston University.

On December 1, 1886 the hospital admitted its first patients, about 200 individuals transferred from other overcrowded facilities. Westborough Insane Hospital was initially designed to accommodate between 400 and

500 patients. By 1889 there were 150 employees at the Hospital and 503 patients: 307 women and 196 men.

The Hospital gradually expanded and absorbed more of the surrounding farms. By 1906 the daily average number of patients had increased to 909. On the far side of Lake Chauncy was the Warren Colony for tuberculosis patients. The Westborough Insane Hospital officially became Westborough State Hospital in 1907. The next year brought other changes when the work week for nurses and attendants was shortened to sixty hours, with one day off. At that time the staff could live in the four nurses' homes, the married couples' home, or in the farm cottage.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Hospital in 1909 saw the connection of the institution to the Metropolitan Aqueduct system, ensuring an abundant supply of fresh water to the Hospital. The demands caused by the number of patients also increased, for in 1910 the average daily number of patients had reached 1,038 with a staff of 314.

Over the next forty years the State Hospital acquired more of the surrounding farmland until the entire parcel encompassed 648.8 acres. According to the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, over 150 acres of state land in Westborough is classified as prime agricultural land. For many years the Hospital, with the help of the patients, raised many vegetables for the Hospital's use in the large gardens on the grounds. Vegetables not used immediately were canned in the hospital cannery. The



The farm at Westborough State Hospital.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

strawberries from the Hospital's extensive strawberry fields were often described as the best in town.

Each state hospital in Massachusetts was expected in some way to contribute to the welfare of the system as a whole. For example, until 1972 heifers bred and raised at Westborough State were transferred to another hospital when old enough to milk. The milk, in turn, was sent to other state hospitals. From 1910 to 1970 pigs were raised in the piggery at Westborough State Hospital on the shores of Little Chauncy, but they were slaughtered elsewhere. Greenhouses and flower gardens on the Hospital grounds provided beauty as well as constructive work for the patients. In the early 1970s the agricultural activities were stopped because the Department of Mental Health believed the program not cost effective.

Until ten years ago Westborough patients worked in the greenhouse, laundry, library, dietary department, garages, and other areas of the Hospital. Most of these programs ceased after it was determined that patients needed to receive wages for this type of work: the Hospital budget did not include funds for such remuneration. Today the occupational therapy department at the Hospital conducts an active program that consists mainly of living skills such as personal hygiene, self-care, cooking, sewing, etc.

Westborough State Hospital reached its peak in the 1950s and 1960s in numbers of patients and staff. In 1950 there were 2,100 patients and 800 employees. To accommodate these patients, the Sharpe Building was built in 1959, the Daniels Building in 1967, and the Hennessey Building in 1968. These three buildings are among the newest in the Massachusetts state hospital system.

In 1984 there are 260 patients at Westborough State Hospital and 397 employees. Today more patients are treated in community mental health clinics, general hospital psychiatric units, group programs, or by private physicians. Currently treating inpatient populations are clinical teams consisting of doctors, registered nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers, and other consulting clinicians. Before the 1950s there was often only one attendant nurse caring for up to fifty patients. Everything was done in large groups—today all treatment is individualized.

Patients were assigned to wards by gender and degree of their disturbed behavior until the 1960s. In the early 1970s the process of "unitization" was implemented. Each community served by the Hospital had several co-ed wards assigned to the patients from their geographical area. The units established at Westborough State Hospital were the Westborough/Marlborough unit, the Greater Framingham unit (now South Middlesex unit), and the Cambridge/Somerville unit.

Presently the Cambridge/Somerville unit has been transferred to Metropolitan State Hospital, and plans are being made to move sixty to seventy patients in the Newton/Wellesley unit at Medfield State to the Daniels Building at Westborough State.

In 1984 the geriatrics unit is housed in the Hadley Building and other patients in the Hennessey Building. The main building, erected in 1848 for the State Reform School, still serves as an administration building for the Hospital.

Other programs operating at Westborough State Hospital with the Department of Youth Services include the Robert F. Kennedy School and three other secure treatment centers. Over forty-two acres of land, mainly east of Lake Chauncy in Crane Swamp and Little Crane Swamp, belong to the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). This property acts as a watershed for the Sudbury Reservoir in Southborough.

The town of Westborough also is interested in the use of state land for its needs. The Westborough Recreation Commission has leased twenty-two acres behind the Hadley Building for use as a ballfield. The Department of Public Works is actively pursuing a water search for a possible town well in the southeast portion of the Hospital land.

Suasco Flood Plain Project

The presence of the headwaters of the Sudbury and Assabet Rivers in town led the state to choose Westborough as one of nine sites along the Assabet for development as a SUASCO (Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Rivers) flood plain area. Flooding of the towns along the Assabet and Concord Rivers during the hurricanes of 1954 and 1955 had caused major concern, and under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act nine dams were built to regulate the flow of the Assabet River.

The SUASCO flood plain in Westborough was constructed from 1968 to 1970 and covers 380 acres off Mill Road. According to Jim Ward, "They took small parcels from Edward Dunne, George Nichols, Al Dunne, and myself. All the land taken was below the elevation of 314.4 feet. The 380 acres ran all the way from the Mill Road out to Arch Street. If the water got up to 314.4 feet, it's possible that some of Arch Street might be inundated. This flood plain is used for retention during high water, and in periods of low water, they can manipulate the flow to flush out the Assabet."

Built across the Nichols farm, the embankment known as the George H. Nichols Dam is twenty feet high and 1,300 feet long. The gated concrete riser of the embankment automatically controls the flow of water into the Assabet by narrowing the outlet to accommodate normal flow.



Suasco flood plain area, est. 1968-1970.

Photo by Barbara and William Goff.

Any excess water from the 4,589-acre drainage area is backed up into the 380-acre storage pond. The pond normally covers an area of 300 acres but is designed to withstand a hundred year's storm (one with 1% chance of occurrence) with the help of an emergency spillway and channel.

Owned and operated by the Massachusetts Division of Water Resources, the local SUASCO flood plain was constructed by this agency in cooperation with the Worcester County District and the federal Soil Conservation Service. The construction cost of approximately \$750,000 was paid for by federal and state funds.

The Westborough SUASCO project is a multiple-purpose dam. Paul Mugford, a former district wildlife manager who was involved in planning the dam, comments, "The site provides not only flood control and low-flow augmentation, but a good habitat for water fowl and aquatic animals. The 'dri-ki'—or dead trees standing in water—provide nesting habitat for the great blue heron. The abundant, varied cover and other habitats are attractive and useful to wood ducks, teal ducks, and greater and lesser yellow legs. There is also muskrat, beaver, mink, raccoon, and weasel in the area." The SUASCO offers Westborough residents not only peace of mind during heavy rains but also an excellent place to observe native wildlife.

The District Court In Westborough

In 1872 an Act of the Legislature established the First District Court

of Eastern Worcester to serve the towns of Westborough, Grafton, Northborough, and Southborough. The first justice of the court was James W. White of Grafton, and upon his death in 1875 William Trowbridge Forbes of Westborough became justice. The court sat in Westborough on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and in Grafton on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

The court sessions were held on the lower floor of Westborough Town Hall until they moved to the newly constructed Keating Building around 1915. With the construction of Westborough's new Town Hall in 1929, the District Court returned to specially designed quarters on the lower level, now the Selectmen's office. Besides the main courtroom there were chambers for the judge and a clerk of court's office. It was during this period that the court began to hold daily sessions in Westborough, suspending its activity in Grafton.

In January 1972 the District Court moved to its new facility built at 175 Milk Street on the former Lyman School property. This courthouse includes two adult courtrooms, a juvenile courtroom, five cells, as well as offices for the clerk/magistrate and staff, chief of probation and staff, and juvenile officers. The towns of Westborough, Shrewsbury, Northborough, Southborough, and Grafton are included in the court's jurisdiction, as well as cases concerning this area from the State Police, Registry



Massachusetts District Court, Westborough Division, b. 1972.

Photo by Paula Skog.

of Motor Vehicles, Metropolitan District Commission, and Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

The supervision of the District Court was transferred from the county to the Commonwealth in 1979. The District Court, Westborough Division, currently has two appointed judges. Criminal cases are heard daily, Juvenile Court is held on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, Civil Court on Monday mornings, and Small Claims Court on Thursday afternoons. The great number of cases heard at the court concern larceny, theft, murder, nonsupport, motor vehicle violations, and even the care and protection of abused children. Not all court business concerns breaking the law; permission to marry for those underage and waivers of the three-day waiting period for marriage are also granted here.



WESTBOROUGH'S HALL OF FAME

These individuals, who were born in Westborough or have lived here for a good number of years, have received recognition regionally or nationally for their contributions to society.

ADMIRAL JAMES E. ARNOLD (1895-1971), naval officer, came to Westborough from Vermont in 1899 at age four and settled with his family on Hardscrabble Farm at 49 Warren Street. Arnold graduated from Westborough High School, then entered Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1915. He interrupted his education to serve on a battleship on the North Sea during World War I; then he returned to graduate from the Naval Academy in 1918. After attending submarine school at New London, Arnold served on destroyers and supervised shipbuilding at Quincy until World War II called him to Europe.

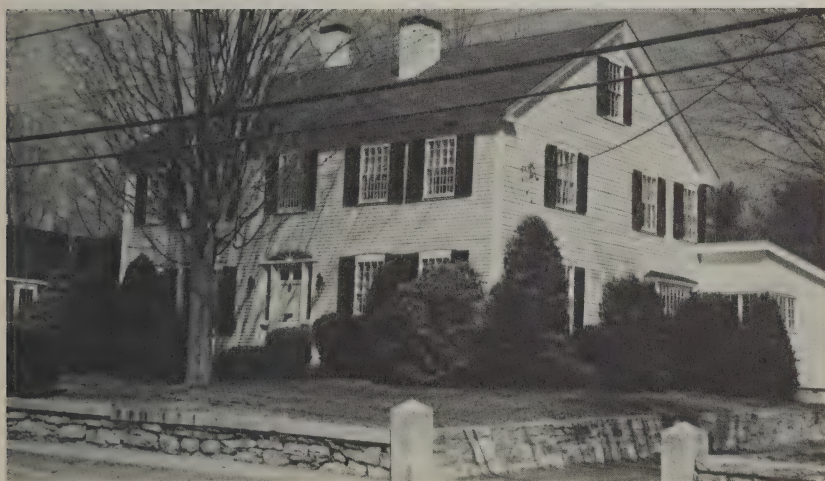
He served the Navy in World War II as Rear Admiral, commanding the U. S. Advanced Amphibian base in Falmouth, England, the Normandy Beach during the assault after D-Day, and the U. S. Navy base at LeHavre from 1944-1945. Admiral Arnold was awarded the Legion of Merit with gold star, the French Croix de Guerre, and the British OBM. In 1969 he incorporated his memories of growing up as a farmboy in Westborough in a novel entitled "Hardscrabble Hall." Arnold lived most of his life in Washington, D. C., where he died in November 1971.

ELI WHITNEY BLAKE (1795-1886), inventor, was born at 105 West



Home of Admiral James E. Arnold, 49 Warren St., c. 1796.

Photo by Paula Skog.



Home of Eli Whitney Blake, 105 W. Main, c. 1790.

Photo by Victor Hamburger.

Main Street, the son of Elihu and Elizabeth Whitney Blake. After graduating from Yale in 1816, he and his brothers joined his uncle Eli Whitney at the Whitney Arms Company in New Haven as partners in the firm. Upon the death of their uncle, Eli and Philos Blake continued the business from 1825 to 1836 until Eli Whitney's young son could assume the responsibility.

From 1836 until 1871 Eli Blake turned his mechanical ingenuity toward invention, receiving patents for a door lock, bedstead castors, and a widely used stone crusher. He was one of the founders of the Connecticut Academy of Sciences and wrote, in 1882, *The Original Solution of Several*



Mary E. Brigham
(1829-1889)

*From W. Brigham's
History of the Brigham Family.*

Problems in Aerodynamics. Blake died in New Haven in August 1886.

MARY ANN BRIGHAM (1829-1889), educator, was the daughter of Dexter Brigham, the innkeeper of Brigham's Inn on Westborough Square. Mary Ann Brigham graduated from Mount Holyoke Seminary at a time when higher education for women was rare. After graduation, she taught private school in Westborough a few years, then became an instructor at Mount Holyoke Seminary from 1844-1858. She continued her career in education as teacher and administrator, serving as principal of Ingham University in New York. In 1889 Mary Ann Brigham was appointed the first president of Mount Holyoke College. Before she could assume her duties, however, she was killed in a train accident in June 1889.

DANIEL CHAMBERLAIN (1782-1860), explorer, was born on Flanders Road and settled there with his wife Jerusha. In 1819 Daniel and Jerusha Chamberlain with their five children joined a group of the first missionaries bound for the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). The Chamberlains carried with them clothing made by Westborough women for the native children, and it is said that the Hawaiians allowed the missionaries to land only after seeing these garments for their children.

On the Sandwich Islands Chamberlain helped construct stone houses and a printing house. He hoped to build up a farm, but he became alarmed at the rapid rate his children were assimilating Hawaiian ways. The Chamberlains returned from the exotic islands to Westborough in 1823.



Home of Sen. Corbett, 39 Belknap St.; c. 1795, ell, c. 1815.

Photo by Paula Skog.

SENATOR HENRY W. CORBETT (1827-1903), politician and developer, was born at 39 Belknap Street in February 1827. As a young man he was intrigued by the West, so Corbett sailed around the horn in 1850 to Portland, Oregon, which was at that time a small town of 400 people. Corbett helped to develop the Pacific Northwest in promoting the construction of buildings, railroads, and river steamboats. He became a successful banker and served as the U. S. senator from Oregon from 1867-1873.

ADMIRAL LOUIS E. DENFELD (1891-1972), naval officer, was born on Fay Street in April 1891. After graduating from Annapolis in 1912 Denfeld returned to Westborough to marry Rachel Metcalf of 9 Charles Street. In World War I he served on destroyers and continued to command destroyers after the War. From 1941-1942 Denfeld served as assistant chief of Naval personnel; then in 1945 he commanded battleships in the Pacific, becoming the Commander in Chief of the Pacific and U. S. Pacific in 1947.

From 1945-1947 Admiral Denfeld was Chief of Naval Personnel. He served as Chief of Naval Operations and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Truman from 1947-1949. He retired from the Navy in 1950, returned to Westborough to live, and worked as a consultant to the Sun Oil Company from 1950-1971. Admiral Denfeld was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and the Legion of Merit with gold star. He died in his home at 9 Charles Street, Westborough, on March 28, 1972.

HAROLD FAY (1877-1947), inventor, was the son of Reverend Hercules Fay of Quail Hill on Warren Street. He returned to Westborough as an adult to hunt from the schoolhouse lodge on East Main Street. As president of the Submarine Signal Company in Boston, Fay was instrumental in the development of supersonic electronic detection devices. His innovations in underwater signaling led to the development of the only successful submarine detectors in World War I, which were used by both the American and British Navies. Fay was recognized nationally for his accomplishments in underwater signaling. He died in 1947.



Forbes Homestead, 187 W. Main St., c. 1749.

Photo by Paula Skog.

The Forbes Family

The Forbes were among the first settlers in Westborough; their surname was originally Forbush, but one branch of the family settling in Westborough preferred to use this shortened version. Jonathan Forbes built a sawmill near the reservoir and Belknap Street in 1714. Descendants of the Forbes of Westborough have contributed a great deal to the town and society in general. Forbes family members have continued to live in the Forbes homestead at 187 West Main Street.

WILLIAM TROWBRIDGE FORBES and HARRIETTE MERRIFIELD were married in 1884 and lived in the large mansion at 39 Church Street, where they raised five children before moving to Trowbridge Road in Worcester.

William T. Forbes (1850-1931), judge, was born at 187 West Main Street in 1850. He graduated from Amherst in 1871 and accepted the challenging position of mathematics instructor at Roberts College in Constantinople from 1871-1874. Returning to Westborough, he was appointed the judge of the First District Court of East Worcester and held court in Westborough from 1875-1879. Forbes became involved in politics locally by serving six years on the school committee and on the state level as a state representative (1881-82) and state senator (1886-87). From 1888 to 1925 Judge Forbes served as justice of the Probate and Insolvency Court in Worcester. He died in November 1931.

Harriette Merrifield Forbes (1856-1951), historian, grew up in Worcester but became absorbed in Westborough history as a resident. She was a thorough and sensitive historian who wrote of Westborough's early days in her 1889 book, *The Hundredth Town*. Ten years later she edited the highly valued colonial diary *Ebenezer Parkman's Book: 1737, 1779-1780*. Harriette Forbes was also a pioneer in the study of early American gravestones; her research and photography resulted in the book, *New England Gravestones and the Men Who Carved Them*, which was pub-



Birthplace of Esther Forbes, 39 Church St., c. 1886.

Courtesy of Margaret Erskine.

lished in 1927 and recognized as an important source book in historical studies.

ESTHER FORBES (1891-1967), writer, daughter of William and Harriette Forbes, was born at 39 Church Street in 1891. After graduating from Bradford Academy in 1912, she joined Houghton Mifflin as an editor. Recognition for her writing talent came when her first novel was chosen as a Book-of-the-Month selection in 1926. Esther Forbes continued to establish her reputation by winning the Pulitzer Prize in American History in 1943 for *The Life and Times of Paul Revere* and the John Newbery Medal in 1944 for her classic children's book, *Johnny Tremain*. She also became involved with the motion picture industry when *Johnny Tremain* was made into a Disney movie and when her *Running of the Tide* received the MGM prize for best novel. The royalties from *Johnny Tremain* were left to the American Antiquarian Society, which had elected Esther Forbes its first female member.

FRANCIS WHITE FORBES (1852-1949) and FANNIE HOOKER FORBES (1860-1947), philanthropists, demonstrated their love of



Esther Forbes (1891-1969)
Courtesy of Margaret Erskine.

Westborough through their donation of many municipal buildings and town improvements during the period of 1910 through the 1940s. Among their contributions to Westborough are the Forbes building (former High School), the Community House, Kirkside, Post Office (Hickox Building), the 4-6 West Main Street commercial block, and the Spurr House. (See Frank and Fannie Forbes, Chapter 5.)

EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH (1858-1929), ornithologist, was raised in Worcester but lived at 9 Church Street in Westborough from 1908 to 1929. Demonstrating an early fascination with wildlife, Forbush was appointed curator of the Museum of Natural History in Worcester at age sixteen. He traveled widely in the United States and Canada; on one field trip to British Columbia he discovered a new species of sparrow, which now carries the Forbush name. From 1908 on he put his expertise to work as state ornithologist. Forbush also was a founder of the Massachusetts Audubon Society and served as its president for twelve years. In 1925 and 1927 he wrote two volumes entitled, *The Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States*. Examples of his bird specimens are on display at the Westborough Library.

DR. EDWIN B. HARVEY (1834-1913), physician and politician, practiced medicine from his office at 52 West Main Street from 1866 to 1913. He served on the Westborough School Committee for eighteen years, then



Home of Dr. Harvey, 52 W. Main St., c. 1830.

Courtesy of Westborough Historical Society.

acted as interim school superintendent from 1887-1890. During his tenure on the school committee, Dr. Harvey was instrumental in building on Phillips Street a "model" school in 1883, which now is the school administration building.

Dr. Harvey expanded his interests to state politics, serving as a state representative from 1884-1885 and state senator from 1894-1895. During his term as representative he introduced and worked successfully for the passage of the bill to provide free textbooks to all Massachusetts schoolchildren.

WILLIAM H. LITTLE (1878-1922) grew up in Westborough and at the turn of the century worked in the Locomobile Factory at 12 Beach Street. After 1902 Little became assistant superintendent of the Locomobile plant in Bridgeport, Connecticut and eventually settled in Flint, Michigan, where he was general manager of the Buick Company. Little produced a car of his own design around 1913 known as the "Little Four," which was a prototype of the Chevrolet. He died in 1922 at age forty-four.

HORACE MAYNARD (1814-1882), statesman, was born in the Maynard homestead at 11 Maynard Street and attended the one-room District #7 schoolhouse on the corner of Otis and Fisher Streets. After graduating from Amherst in 1838, he taught mathematics at the University of Eastern Tennessee. Maynard was admitted to the bar in 1844, prac-



Birthplace of Horace Maynard, 11 Maynard St., c. 1777.

Photo by Paula Skog.

ticed in Knoxville, and served as that state's attorney general from 1863-1865.

Known for his wit, tact, and intelligence, Maynard turned to politics. He was a member of the U. S. House of Representatives from Tennessee from 1857-1863 and 1866-1878. Maynard took the unpopular path of siding with the North during the Civil War, but in 1875 he was rewarded when President Grant appointed him Minister to Turkey. He served as ambassador in this exotic land for five years. Upon his return, he was appointed Postmaster General of the United States, an office he occupied until his death in 1882. Horace Maynard enjoyed spending summers at the family home in Westborough and purchased the house for his retirement, but he did not live long enough to enjoy this Westborough home.

MICHAEL MURPHY (1861-1913), athletic trainer, was born on Flanders Road. Murphy became a professional sprinter before he was twenty and established a local athletic training camp in 1885. Murphy worked as track coach and football trainer at Yale from 1887 to 1905, with six years at the University of Pennsylvania from 1895-1900. In 1900 he took teams from the University of Pennsylvania and the New York Athletic Club to the Paris Olympics. Murphy subsequently coached the American Olympic Team in London in 1908 and in Stockholm in 1912. He is credited with introducing the crouch start in sprinting and with improving techniques of jumping, pole vaulting, and hurdling. His book, *Athletic Training*, was published posthumously in 1914.

JOSEPH H. QUICK (1909-), originator of the Work-Factor system



Joseph Quick

Courtesy of Joseph Quick.

and founder of the Wofac Company, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and presently lives at 192 West Main Street in Westborough. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania. As a rate setter for Philco Company in 1932, Quick devised the first index of actual times needed for manual motions and mental processes as a system to measure work without mechanical devices. Quick described the system in his book, *Work-Factor Time Standards*, which has been translated into the languages of all the industrial nations of the world and used widely to improve corporate productivity.

In 1965 Joseph Quick was cited for his contribution to the postwar recovery of Japan. The Society for Advancement of Management awarded Quick the Gilbreth Medal in 1971 for his contributions as engineer, author, and lecturer. The Wofac Company, founded in 1946, became the Science Management Corporation in 1967. The company is now based in Bridgewater, New Jersey, with subsidiaries throughout Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa.

JOHN RUGGLES (1789-1874), father of the modern Patent Office, was born and raised in the house now located at 17 Ruggles Street. Upon graduating from Brown, he studied law, set up practice in Maine, and eventually served as justice of Maine's Supreme Court from 1834-1835. Ruggles was also active in politics, serving as a state legislator from 1825-1831 and as U. S. senator from Maine from 1835-1841. It was dur-



Home of John Ruggles, 17 Ruggles St., c. 1795.

Photo by Paula Skog.

ing this time, in 1836, that Ruggles framed the bill reorganizing the Patent Office, which was signed into law by President Jackson. This reorganization required technical examination of all applications for patents. The first patent to be granted under the new system went to Senator Ruggles for a geared wheel for locomotives.



Bee Warburton

Photo by Annette Kahn.

BEATRICE A. WARBURTON (1903-), iris hybridizer, lives surrounded by her garden at 2 Warburton Lane off East Main Street. Raised in Brighton, Mrs. Warburton began to plant and cross-breed small-bearded irises when she moved to Westborough in 1948. Each year she raises almost 4,000 irises in her Westborough garden.

Nearly 100 new varieties of irises are Mrs. Warburton's originations and are registered with the American Iris Society. Warburton irises are now grown all over the world—in New Zealand, South Africa, Russia, Japan, and Europe. In 1978 Beatrice Warburton edited the comprehen-

sive reference book, *The World of Irises*, and she has translated scientific books on irises from German, Romanian, and French. Mrs. Warburton serves as the international chairwoman of the American Iris Society and writes a column in the Society's quarterly bulletin. A recipient of many international awards, Beatrice Warburton is recognized worldwide for her work in hybridizing irises.



Rambler's Roost, home of Anna Weinstock, 8 Flanders Rd., c. 1817.

Photo by Paula Skog.

ANNA WEINSTOCK (Mrs. Jesse Schneider) (1895-1979), labor mediator, lived forty-three years in Westborough, mainly at "Rambler's Roost" on 8 Flanders Road. Born in Boston, she began work in a necktie factory at age fourteen and five years later became the business agent for the local Necktie Workers Union. In 1917 Weinstock was an organizer of the Massachusetts Suffrage Association and served as president of the state branch of the Women's Trade Union.

President Harding appointed the 27-year-old Weinstock to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in 1922, making her the first woman to be appointed to the Federal Department of Labor. Considered a textile industry expert, Weinstock settled thousands of labor disputes throughout the country, particularly the 1929 strike of rayon workers in Elizabethton, Tennessee, involving more than 35,000 employees.

Weinstock served for forty-two years as a Federal Mediation Commissioner, and much of her work focused on New England, New York, and

New Jersey. In 1957 she was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, and until her death in 1979 Weinstock continued as an arbitrator and fact-finder in labor disputes.



Craig Whitney

Courtesy of Carol Whitney.

CRAIG WHITNEY (1943-), journalist, was raised at 15 Church Street. After graduating from Harvard he joined the New York Times staff, serving as a foreign correspondent in Saigon, Bonn (1973-77), and Moscow (1977-80). In 1978 the Soviet Committee for Radio and T. V. charged him with slander; despite this charge Whitney continued to report news as he saw it in the Soviet Union. Currently Whitney serves as assistant managing editor of the New York Times staff.

ELI WHITNEY (1765-1825), inventor of the cotton gin and father of American mass production, was born on the crest of the present Eli Whitney Street and graduated from Yale in 1792. His inventive mind and mechanical ability produced the cotton gin in 1794, an invention that enabled the South to become economically independent through its lucrative cotton exports.

Whitney is also credited with establishing the first American factory based on specialization of labor and the mass production of interchangeable parts. In the early 1800s the Whitney Arms Company in New Haven produced rifles using this system and introduced the concept of mass assembly to the United States. Whitney trained and employed his Westborough

nephews—Eli, Elihu, and Philos Blake—in his successful firm. He died in 1825 and is buried in New Haven, Connecticut, but the original doorstep of his birthplace serves as his commemorative marker in Westborough.



An Aerial View of Downtown Westborough.

Photo by Rocco Paolini.

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This account has been written to the best knowledge of the author using data currently available.



Center of Westborough

Photo by Rocco Paolini.

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Photo by Paula Skog

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kristina Nilson Allen, in addition to working as a writer/editor in the Communications Office at Clark University, devotes much of her time and energy promoting a better understanding of Westborough by giving local history lectures and tours to community groups as well as to Westborough schools. As chairman of the Library Trustees, past president of the Westborough Historical Society, and member of various town committees, Mrs. Allen continues to build an active knowledge of present-day Westborough while developing and sharing with others an appreciation of its past.

N89³/₄ E864

	Explanations
Meeting House	
School House	
Tavern	
Dwelling House	
Wood land & Swamp	
Meadow	
Store	

A horizontal number line is shown with tick marks at 0, 1, 2, and 4. The intervals $(-\infty, 1)$ and $(2, \infty)$ are shaded with vertical lines, representing the solution set $x < 1$ or $x > 2$. The points 1 and 2 are marked with open circles.

